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Al-Munṣif min al-Kalām ‘alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām

by

Taqī al-Dīn al-Shumunnī [d.1468]

A Critical Edition of the First Third of the Text (up to the Letter
Fā’)
with an Introductory Study

By

Abdulmajeed Ibrahim al-Mubarak

Part I of II

A thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Durham

Institute for Middle Eastern
and Islamic Studies

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ABSTRACT

Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī is considered one of the most outstanding figures to have appeared in the history of the field of Arabic grammar. Thus, some biographers compare him to the illustrious Sībawayh.

The greatest of all Ibn Hishām's works is without doubt *Mughnī al-Labīb 'an Kutub al-A'arīb*, written by the author for the benefit of fellow scholars and researchers, and not for beginners or regular students. A number of scholars have undertaken to write commentaries on this work, the most famous of these being Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and al-Damāmīnī. These were followed by al-Shumunnī, who intended his explanation to be a judgment between these two commentaries and the book of Ibn Hishām on their points on which they disputed. Nevertheless, except for an old uncritical edition dating from 1888, none of these commentaries has been published, despite their profound importance.

The aim of the current research is thus primarily to bring into the open, in a modern academic style, a portion of the commentary on *Mughnī al-Labīb* known as *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām 'alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām*, written by Taqī al-Dīn al-Shumunnī; something not previously seen for this work. Considering the great size of the work, I have restricted myself to just a part of it, equaling about a third of the text, while hoping that my future endeavors will be primarily aimed at completing the work.

In addition, the current thesis consists of an academic study consisting of

three chapters, the first relating to Ibn Hishām, the second to al-Shumunnī, and the third to the latter's *al-Munşif min al-Kalām ‘alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām*. Thereby the whole thesis is divided into two parts, the first: An Introductory Study, and the second: The Edited Text.

DEDICATION

To my beloved parents,

Words are not sufficient to express my everlasting indebtedness to my beloved parents for their endless love, affection, steadfastness and heartfelt encouragement. I am and will always be indebted to them for everything they have done to make me who I am now. They have truly been my sole crutch in hard times.

To my beloved wife,

I also dedicate this work to my wife for her tremendous sacrifice, patience, encouragement and love.

To my beloved children,

To my dear brothers and sisters,

To all of my relatives,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express firstly my sincere appreciation and thanks to my supervisor Dr. Paul Starkey for his guidance, patience, and encouragement at all stages of my thesis.

My thanks are also extended to all the staff of the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Study, and in particular Mrs. Barbara Farnworth, the secretary for postgraduate study.

I am deeply grateful to the King Fahd University of Petroleum, especially the Department of Islamic and Arabic Studies, for their encouragement and support.

I am also very grateful to my close and dear friends: Hanif and Ayman Abdel Haleem for their assistance and invaluable help. I would like also to take this opportunity to thank all my friends in the United Kingdom, in particular Dr. Naser al-Amry, Younis Burhan, and Amjad al-Majid for all the help they have given me.

In Saudi Arabia there are many friends and colleagues who deserve my gratitude, but my appreciation in particular goes to Majid Shukri and Muḥammad

al-Amin; they provided me with all the help that was necessary to complete my research, and their encouragement has been with me ever since I left that country.

Throughout the years of this research, the huge sacrifice made by my wife and life partner must be acknowledged as a major factor in bringing this work to its completion.

However, more important than all of these are my beloved parents for all that they have done (and still do) for me throughout my life, that has helped to bring me to this point. For this my appreciation is unending.

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TRANSLITERATION

The system of Arabic transliteration that has been used is below:

Arabic Letters	Transliteration	Vowels	
ء	'	Short	
ب	b		a
ت	t		u
ث	th		i
ج	j	Long	
ح	ḥ	ا	ā
خ	kh	ي	ī
د	d	و	ū
ذ	dh		
ر	r		
ز	z		
س	s		
ش	sh		
ص	ṣ		
ض	ḍ		
ط	ṭ		
ظ	ẓ		
ع	'		
غ	gh		
ف	f		
ق	q		
ك	k		
ل	l		
م	m		
ن	n		
ه	h		
و	w		
ي	y		
ة	h		

INTRODUCTION

In the 8th/14th century a leading light in the field of Arabic grammar appeared, having such an influence that he became a leader in this branch of knowledge, while also contributing to numerous others. His fame superseded that of many of his contemporaries, and even that of some of those pioneers who preceded him in the field. This man was Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī al-Miṣrī (708-761/1309-1360).

Ibn Hishām's fame and scholarly status reached such a height that the famous historian Ibn Khaldūn was moved to describe him as follows:¹

For instance, we modern Maghrebīs have received the work of an Egyptian philologist whose name is Ibn Hishām. The contents show that Ibn Hishām has completely mastered (before) save by Sībawayh, Ibn Jinnī, and people of their class.

What Ibn Khaldūn says is not far from the truth, and proof of this can be found in the works that Ibn Hishām left behind that amply bear witness to his stature in grammar. From the age of Ibn Hishām until now, these works have been regarded as primary works for all those studying Arabic grammar, whether this be in the essential, secondary, or higher stages of learning.

It is fair to say that, among Ibn Hishām's grammatical works, which exceed

¹ Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd al-Raḥmān, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Trans. by Franz Rosenthal. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958. vol. III, p. 289.

thirty in number, the book *Mughnī al-Labīb ‘an Kutub al-A‘ārīb* is the greatest and most important, while also being one of the most in-depth and eminent of all works on Arabic grammar.²

Ibn Hishām wrote it twice: the first time was in the year 749/1348, but the work was lost from him on his journey from Mecca to Egypt; and then he rewrote it in 756/1355.³ From the time it was written, the work spread wide amongst the circles of scholars and students, with commentaries dealing with various aspects of it being authored.

One of the most important of these commentaries is the book *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām ‘alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām* by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Shumunnī (801-872/1399-1468). This work was published in an old uncritical edition in 1305/1890.⁴ In addition, there are several manuscripts of it, reaching thirty in number, spread over a number of libraries throughout the world. Despite this, it has not been edited in a scholarly manner until now, just as al-Shumunnī, the author of the commentary, has not been the subject of a comprehensive academic study.

The commentary of al-Shumunnī is of particularly great importance for the following reasons:

² Al-Ḍab‘, Yūsuf ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *Ibn Hishām wa Atharahu fī al-Naḥw al-‘Arabī*. 1st ed. Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1998. p. 92; Gully, A. *Grammar and Semantics in Medieval Arabic: A study of Ibn-Hisham's 'Mughnī l-Labīb'*. Richmond: Curzon Press Ltd, 1995. p.1.

³ Ibn Hishām, ‘Abdulla ibn Yūsuf al-Anṣārī. *Mughnī al-Labīb ‘an Kutub al-A‘ārīb*. Edited by Muḥammad Muḥyī Al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d. vol. I, p. 9.

⁴ Al-Shumunnī, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām ‘alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām*. Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Bahiyya, A H 1305.

1. The author has an astonishing familiarity with many other of the Arabic and Islamic sciences (Qur'ānic exegesis, Ḥadīth, history, literature, etc.), these being reflected in the methodology and style with which he has written the *al-Munṣif*.
2. Al-Shumunnī has thoroughly consulted the other most widely cited commentaries of *al-Mughnī*, in particular those of Ibn al-Sā'igh and al-Damāmīnī. While al-Shumunnī was teaching the *al-Mughnī* to his students, not only was he frequently referring to these commentaries, but more importantly was assessing their criticisms of Ibn Hishām and contributing many valuable comments himself.
3. None of the commentaries of *al-Mughnī*, neither those which al-Shumunnī discussed in his own work (like Ibn al-Sā'igh and al-Damāmīnī), nor those which came later, has ever been edited in a critical scholarly manner.

For these reasons, a critical edition of this commentary, *al-Munṣif*, is greatly needed for students of Arabic grammar. As a result, I decided to choose this work as the subject of my doctoral research. I will undertake to critically study the work, while also editing a portion of it, equal to approximately one third of the whole commentary, since the book is of considerable size. Thus, my thesis will be divided into two parts, the first being an introductory study intended to elucidate

the text for the modern reader by focusing on the historical and cultural setting in which Ibn Hisham and al-Shummuni lived and worked, and discussing important aspects of the work. The second part shall be the Edited Text consisting of the first third of al-Shummuni's book up to the letter *fā'*.

The First Part: An Introductory Study

This will consist of three chapters:

1. This will consist of an introduction to Ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī, the author of the book *Mughnī al-Labīb*. This will cover the age in which he lived, his life, his scholarly life and the works authored by him. I wish to add that this type of introduction is by no means the first of its kind, as studies regarding Ibn Hishām are many and varied; however, no thesis on this subject would be complete without some discussion of this scholar, the author of the *Mughnī*. After all, the thesis deals with one of the commentaries on the book of Ibn Hishām *Mughnī al-Labīb*, so it is necessary that some portion of the thesis be about him.
2. This consists of a study of the age in which al-Shumunnī lived, dealing with the political, social, and scholastic life of that age. This is followed by a

comprehensive study of al-Shumunnī's own social and scholastic life, of the works he authored, and of his teachers and students. During this study of al-Shumunnī's life, I have tried to make use of every single piece of information about al-Shumunnī, or anything linked to him given in all the available sources, and particularly in the history books and the biographical works. This is in order to give a clear and accurate picture of al-Shumunnī; hence this study, according to my knowledge, is the first on this subject.

3. This consists of an analytical study of the book *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām 'alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām*. This will include a discussion of al-Shumunnī's methodology in explaining *Mughnī al-Labīb*, then of his position with regard to Ibn Hishām. Likewise, it will cover his position vis-à-vis those scholars who wrote commentaries on *Mughnī al-Labīb* before him, namely Ibn al-Sā'igh and al-Damāmīnī; and then his position with regard to some of the earliest grammarians, who had an influence on the history of grammar, such as al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad and Sībawayh. There is also, in this section, an indication given of the primary sources upon which al-Shumunnī depended in his book. This study, like the one above regarding al-Shumunnī's life, is the first ever to have been undertaken on this subject. Furthermore, I will detail the available manuscripts of the book *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām* and indicate their locations, while also choosing the best of these manuscripts as the subject of my editing work. I will also clarify the

methodology that I have followed in editing the book.

The Second Part: The Edited Text

This part will contain the edited text, which consists of approximately one third of the book, from its beginning up to the letter ف .

CHAPTER 1 A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF IBN HISHĀM

1.1 Ibn Hishām's Age and Milieu

Ibn Hishām lived in the 8th/14th century, during the Mamlūk era, which stretched from 648/1250 until 923/1517, and whose dominion comprised the lands of Egypt and Greater Syria. The Mamlūk era was itself divided into two parts, or rather two states:

- The Baḥrī Mamlūk state, extending from 648/1250 until 784/1382.
- The Burjī Mamlūk state, extending from 784/1382 until 923/1517.

Ibn Hishām (708/1309-761/1360) lived during the time of the Baḥrī Mamlūk state, which emerged in Egypt and Greater Syria immediately following the Ayyubid dynasty. Towards the end of their reign, the Ayyubids began employing large numbers of Turkish *mamlūks* (slaves). The authority and influence of these



mamlūks increased and spread, particularly within the army, until it reached a level where they could even remove one sultan and replace him with another. This they did with al-Malik al-‘Ādil, when they plotted against him and succeeded in removing and replacing him with al-Sālih Ayyūb.⁵

When al-Malik al-Sālih died suddenly in 647/1249, his son Tūrānshāh succeeded to the throne. He, however, did not last long as he displeased the Mamlūks, who therefore assassinated him in 648/1250. They replaced him by his mother, Shajarat al-Durr, but only three months later they sought to seize power for themselves. They pledged allegiance to ‘Izz al-Dīn Aybak, the leader of the army, and he became the first of the Baḥrī Mamlūk sultans.⁶

It is worth mentioning here the nature of the Baḥrī Mamlūk rule and the manner of their authority and influence. Their age is best described as being factional, with power and authority being shared; meaning that each sultan had his own support, coming from his royal *mamlūks*, and each emir had his own support, coming from those *mamlūks* which were linked to him, who had offered him their loyalty, and who considered him their master. The sultan’s ability to stand firm in the face of the rivalries and plotting of the emirs was dependent upon the strength of his support, and on the number of his *mamlūks*. Similarly, the ability of an emir to overcome his fellow emirs—and even to overcome the sultan so as to seize the

⁵ See al-Maqrīzī, Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī. *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I‘tibār bi Dhikri al-Khiṭaṭ wa l-Āthār (al-Khiṭaṭ)*. Cairo: Dār al-Taḥrīr li l-Ṭab‘ wa l-Nashr, n.d. vol. I, p. 295; ‘Āshūr, Sa‘īd. *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamālīkī fī Miṣr wa l-Shām*. 3rd ed. Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglū al-Miṣriyya. 1994. p. 10.

⁶ ‘Āshūr, Sa‘īd. *Miṣr wa l-Shām fī ‘Aṣr al-Ayyūbiyyīn wa l-Mamālīk*. Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍa al-‘Arabiyya, n.d. pp. 171ff.

position for himself—was dependent upon the strength of his support.⁷

Also worthy of note here is the fall of Baghdad in 656/1258 and the Tatar invasion coming from the east, both of which happened in the first years of Mamlūk rule. Al-Zāhir Baybars played a major role in repelling the Tatars at the famous battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt. This came after the Tatars had already occupied much of Greater Syria, slaughtering vast numbers in both Damascus and Aleppo in 658/1260.⁸ The battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt was a leading cause of the unification of Egypt and Syria under the Mamlūk banner, since prior to that, Greater Syria was still under Ayyubid control. Furthermore, by standing firm in the face of the Tatars, the Mamlūks won the peoples' acceptance of their authority and agreement as to their legitimacy. This was even more so the case as the Tatars had overrun all the lands in their way all the way to Syria, with nobody being able to defeat them. Thus, when the Mamlūks successfully routed the Tartars, they won immense respect and admiration for themselves.⁹

Another important point in this context is that al-Zāhir Baybars, following his defeat of the Tatars and having achieved this lofty status, wanted to clothe his power with a degree of splendor and reverence, and give it even more legitimacy. He thus restored the Islamic caliphate, which had previously fallen at the hands of the Tatars. However, he made Egypt the abode of the caliph instead of Baghdad,

⁷ ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 105. See Ayalon, D., “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army --I” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, vol. 15, No. 2. (1953), p. 206.

⁸ Ibn Kathīr, Ismā‘īl Ibn ‘Umar. *al-Bidāya wa l-Nihāya*. 3rd ed. edited by ‘Abdulla al-Turkī. Dār Hajar 1997. vol. XVII, pp. 395ff.

⁹ Qāsim, ‘Abduh Qāsim. *Dirāsāt fī Tārīkh Miṣr al-Ijtimā‘ī*. 2nd ed. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1983. p. 12.

and at the same time removed from him any effective role, making his position merely a ceremonial one.¹⁰

With regards to the social perspective, the Mamlūks paid great attention to the cultural and architectural sides of society. This is despite their background being based upon militarism, the art of fighting, and training in horsemanship (in addition to a degree of attention being paid to some of the elementary branches of knowledge).¹¹

Despite this, they worked towards the propagation of knowledge, and established a large number of *madrasas*,¹² which they opened without restriction to all those wishing to learn, in all corners of their lands.¹³ A brief look at the book *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār* by al-Maqrīzī is sufficient to show the importance and abundance of these *madrasas*. Al-Maqrīzī enumerates more than seventy of them, while also giving an account of the establishment of each *madrasa*, and certain details regarding it, including the subjects studied and scholars teaching therein.¹⁴ The cultural impact of the fall of Baghdad could be clearly seen, since eyes now turned to Greater Syria and Egypt, with anyone who escaped the Tatar advance transferring there. Thus the Mamlūk state, whose authority had spread throughout

¹⁰ Hitti, P. *The Arabs: A Short History*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: Princeton University Press, 1970. p. 242.

¹¹ Farrūkh, 'Umar. *Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī*. 4th ed. Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li l-Malāyīn. 1984. vol. III, p. 610.

¹² "The name of an institution of learning where the Islamic sciences are taught, i.e. a college for higher studies" see R. Hillenbrand, "Madrasah" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*. New Edition, Ed. H.A.R. Gibb, *et al.* Leiden, 1960-. vol. V, p.1123a.

¹³ See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, p. 315; 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 339.

¹⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, pp. 313ff.

this region, became a natural centre for culture and civilization.¹⁵

It is noticeable that the different branches of knowledge circulated widely during this era, with attention being paid to the study of jurisprudence with its various schools, to the study and transmission of Hadith, to language, theology, literature, and similarly to mathematics and the natural sciences.¹⁶

We are able to observe this through the books and reference works composed at the time. This age witnessed the production of a number of huge works, written on every branch of knowledge. Taking history and biographical writings as an example, we find *Wafāyāt al-A'yān* by Ibn Khallikān (681/1282), *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* by al-Ṣafadī (764/1362), *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* by al-Dhahabī, and *al-Bidāya wa l-Nihāya* by Ibn Kathīr (774/1372). Looking at language, it is sufficient for us to mention the *Lisān al-'Arab* of Ibn Manẓūr (711/1311), considered one of the greatest dictionaries. As for the field of Qur'ānic exegesis, there is *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt* by Abu Ḥayyān (745/1344) and the *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* of Ibn Kathīr (774/1372). Similarly, there are those reference works dealing with civilization and culture, amongst the most important of which are *Nihāyat al-Arab* by al-Nuwayrī (733/1332) and *Masālik al-Abṣār* by al-'Umarī (749/1348).

¹⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara fī Tārīkh Miṣr wal Qāhira*. 1st ed. by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2004. vol. II, p. 75.

¹⁶ See Farrūkh, vol. III, pp. 611,612; 'Umrān 'Abd al-Salām Shu'ayb. *Manhaj Ibn Hishām min Khilāl Kitābih al-Mughnī*. 1st ed. Libya: al-Dār al-Jamāhīriyya li l-Nashr wa l-Tawzī' wa l-I'lān. 1986. p. 13.

1.2 Ibn Hishām's Life and Upbringing

1.2.1 His Name and Lineage

Some biographical sources detailing the life of Ibn Hishām indicate that his full name was 'Abdullāh ibn Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abdulla ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī al-Miṣrī. Others, such as *al-Durar al-Kāmina* of Ibn Ḥajar and *al-Badr al-Ṭālī* of al-Shawkānī, have added two other names to his family tree; thus they give his name as 'Abdulla ibn Yūsuf ibn 'Abdulla ibn Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abdulla ibn Hishām al-Anṣārī al-Miṣrī.¹⁷ A possible reason for the difference is that those biographers that omitted the two extra names—those of his grandfather and great-grandfather—may have done so for the sake of brevity.

His *laqab* (title) is unanimously reported as Jamāl al-Dīn. As for his *kunya*,¹⁸ this is given by more than one biographer as Abu Muḥammad;¹⁹ however, he was almost universally referred to as Ibn Hishām.

As is clear from his family tree, he was an Anṣārī, meaning that his genealogy goes back to the tribes of the Anṣār—those tribes which used to inhabit Madina during, and prior to the first years of Islam. These tribes were divided into al-Aws and al-Khazraj, with some sources stating that Ibn Hishām was a

¹⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-'Asqalānī. *al-Durar al-Kāmina fī A'yān al-Mi'a al-Thāmina*. Beirut: Dār al-Jīl. 1993. vol. II, p. 308; al-Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī. *al-Badr al-Ṭālī 'bi Maḥāsini man ba'da al-Qarn al-Sābi*'. 1st ed. by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya. Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1929. vol. I, p. 400.

¹⁸ An honorific consisting of *Abu* (father of) or *Umm* (mother of) with a name.

¹⁹ See Ibn Taghrī Bardī, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥāsini Yūsuf. *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Miṣr wa l-Qāhira*. Edited by group of editors. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1971. vol. X, p. 336; al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Nazm al-'Iqyān fī A'yān al-A'yān*. Edited by Philip Hitti. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Ilmiyya, 1927. p. 121.

descendant of the tribe of al-Khazraj.²⁰

The tribes of the Anṣār themselves were descendants of al-Azd, a tribe whose origins went back to the tribe of Qaḥṭān.²¹ Thus Ibn Hishām was descended from the southern Arab tribes.

1.2.2 His Birth and Upbringing

The majority of sources state that he was born in Cairo in 708/1309,²² with some even mentioning the exact day as being Saturday, 5th Dhū l-Qa‘da.²³

As for his early upbringing, the historical sources do not inform us of anything in this regard. However, it is clear that it must have involved a great deal of serious study, since he died at the age of fifty-four, having authored almost fifty works. His magnum opus was *Mughnī al-Labīb*, from which can be gauged his mature scholarly nature. The first copy of this work was written in 749/1348,²⁴ making his age at the time forty-one years; and normally one does not reach this level of maturity at such a young age unless one has established oneself in his early life and spared no effort in the pursuit of learning.

²⁰ Al-Amīr, Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad. *Hashiya ‘alā Mughnī al-Labīb*. Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Ḥalabī, n.d. vol. I, p.2.

²¹ Ibn Ḥazm, ‘Ali ibn Aḥmad al-Andalusī. *Jamharat Ansāb al-‘Arab*. edited by ‘Abd al-Salām Hārūn. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1962. p. 332.

²² See Ibn Hajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. II, p. 308; al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā fī Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawīyyīn wa l-Nuḥā*. 2nd ed. by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1979. vol. II, p. 68; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. I, p. 400.

²³ ‘Umrān Shu‘ayb, p. 20; al-Ḍab‘, p. 18.

²⁴ Ibn Hisham, *Mughnī al-labīb*, vol. I, p. 9.

1.2.3 His Family

The biographical sources which tell us about Ibn Hishām do not offer much information about his family. Hardly anything is known about his parents, suggesting that he may have belonged to a middle-class family, not renowned for anything significant enough to be recorded by the history books.

However, there is some information regarding his children and grandchildren. It is mentioned that he had two sons:²⁵ the eldest of these was Muḥammad, whose *laqab* was Muḥibb al-Dīn, who was born in 750/1349, and who, like his father, was an outstanding grammarian of considerable renown. He studied under his father and a number of other scholars, and died in 799/1397. Muḥammad himself had a son, named ‘Abdulla, who was brought up an orphan. He memorized the Qur’ān and the famous poem on grammar, the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Malik, as well as studying Islamic jurisprudence. He subsequently became a teacher and a muftī. He died in 855/1451.

Ibn Hisham’s other son was called ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, his *laqab* being Taqī al-Dīn, and the historical sources tell us nothing about him except that he himself had two sons. The first of these was named Muḥammad, and he was given the *laqab* Walī al-Dīn. Al-Sakhāwī states²⁶ that he memorized the Qur’ān and certain

²⁵ al-Sakhāwī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *al-Daw’ al-Lami’ li Ahl al-Qarn al-Tāsi’*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1934. vol. I, p. 329; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu’āt*, vol. I, p.148.

²⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. I, p. 329.

other books, although he was not a specialist in grammar. Rather, his attention was primarily turned towards trade. He died in 866/1462. The other son was Aḥmad, given the *laqab* Shihāb al-Dīn. He took a greater interest in learning than his brother, excelling in certain Arabic and religious branches of knowledge. He died in 835/1432.

1.2.4 His Personality and Character

The references made to his good character and upright nature, as well as to his humility and mild-heartedness are clear to anyone who studies the biography of Ibn Hishām in the various biographical works.²⁷ This is also apparent from reading his works; for despite their number one does not find anything contrary to that mentioned about him in his biographies, and one can hardly find a harsh word in his discussion of those holding opposing opinions.

1.2.5 His Death

Following a life filled with scholarly activity, Ibn Hishām passed away according to the majority of his biographers on Thursday night, 5th Dhū l-Qa‘da 761 (24/9/1360) - only the author of *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* differs in giving the year of his

²⁷ See Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. II, p. 309; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. II, p. 69; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. I, p. 401.

death as 762.

As for his grave, Dr. Yūsuf al-Dab‘ states that it remains known until this day near Bāb al-Naṣr in Cairo, and that over it is a small headstone, upon which is engraved the date of his birth and the date of his death.²⁸

1.3 His Intellectual Life

When speaking about Ibn Hishām’s intellectual life, it is appropriate to mention the words of Ibn Khaldūn in his famous *al-Muqaddima* concerning mastery of a field of knowledge. Ibn Khaldūn offers Ibn Hishām as a model, saying:²⁹

This (wealth of material) requires a great deal from the student. He could spend his (whole) life on less (material). No one would aspire to complete knowledge of it, though there are a few, rare exceptions (of men who have a complete knowledge of philology). For instance, we modern Maghrebīs have received the work of an Egyptian philologist whose name is Ibn Hishām. The contents show that Ibn Hishām has completely mastered the habit of philology as it had not been mastered (before) save by Sībawayh, Ibn Jinnī, and people of their class, so greatly developed is his philological habit and so comprehensive is his knowledge and experience as regards the principles and

²⁸ Al-Dab‘, p. 18.

²⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, vol. III, p. 289.

details of philology.

This testimony by Ibn Khaldūn, one of the contemporaries of Ibn Hishām, deserves our attention, as it is by no means easy for an author or a scholar to attain to such praise unless his scholarly status is unparalleled, such that his contemporaries distinguish him above all others and acknowledge his precedence and superiority. Similar testimonies may be found in the works of some of the leading biographical authors—those whose distinction is agreed by all scholars—such as Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī in his book *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, and al-Suyūṭī in *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*.³⁰

It would be worthwhile for us to mention some of Ibn Hishām’s most famous teachers and students, as well as some of his most important works, so as to help shed light on his intellectual life.

1.3.1 His Teachers:

Ibn Hishām studied under many scholars, the names of a great number of which are given in the biographical works, whether these are scholars of the Arabic language, of the Qur’ān, of Jurisprudence, or any of the additional subjects which helped him to occupy his lofty status. Amongst his teachers were:

³⁰ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. II, p. 308; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. II, p.

- Ibn al-Muraḥḥal, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ḥarrānī al-Shāfi‘ī (d.744/1344).

He was a brilliant scholar in the fields of grammar, philology, rhetoric, and the various styles of reading the Qur’ān. He paid great attention to the Arabic language, and in particular to Ibn Mālik’s *al-Alfiyya*, in which he was highly proficient. Ibn Hishām had a special relationship with Ibn al-Muraḥḥal: Ibn Ḥajar stating that Ibn Hishām used to laud him, and it was he who recognised the status of his teacher. He used to praise him highly and rank him above Abū Ḥayyān and others, saying that during his era, Abū Ḥayyān had the greatest reputation, but most benefit could be gained from Ibn al-Muraḥḥal.³¹

- Al-Fākihānī, ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī al-Lakhmī (654/1256-731/1331).

He was a specialist in Hadith, and was a scholar of jurisprudence according to the Mālikī school. He also excelled in the field of Arabic language, becoming a leading scholar in this and a number of other fields. He authored works on grammar, jurisprudence, Hadith, and other subjects.³²

- Al-Tibrīzī, ‘Alī ibn Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shāfi‘ī (667/1269-746/1346).

³¹ Ibn Kathīr, vol. XVIII, p. 403; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. II, p. 407.

³² Ibn Kathīr, vol. XVIII, p. 370; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. III, p.178; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. II, p. 221.

He excelled in grammar, jurisprudence, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, arithmetic, geometry, as well as other fields, such that al-Suyūṭī described him by saying:³³ “He had no equal in his era, and he was one of those scholars who combined all types of knowledge.” However, despite the fact that he occupied himself primarily with the field of Hadith, in which he authored a number of books and synopses, Ibn Ḥajar and al-Suyūṭī state that he had little experience in the field. Ibn Hishām benefited greatly from his knowledge and his works.³⁴

- Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamā‘a, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kinānī (639/1241-733/1331).

He studied in Damascus, where he became a teacher and thereafter occupied the position of Chief Judge of Jerusalem, then Cairo, and finally Damascus. In addition to his official duties he never ceased to write and to teach in a number of schools. He was a skilled orator, was a highly eminent figure, and was one of those who wrote extensively on a range of subjects.³⁵

- Abu Ḥayyān, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Andalusī (654/1256-745/1344).

³³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. II, p. 171.

³⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. III, p. 72; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. II, p. 171.

³⁵ Ibn Kāthīr, vol. XVIII, p. 357; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. III, p. 280.

He was born in Granada, but moved about until he took up residence in Cairo. He was one of the leading scholars of Arabic, Qur'ānic exegesis, biographies, history and literature. He also composed a large collection of poetry, as well as authoring a great number of works, some voluminous, on various subjects. Al-Suyūṭī³⁶ mentions him as having authored in the region of thirty books, while al-Shawkānī³⁷ numbers them at over fifty. The sources state, however, that the only work that Ibn Hishām studied with Abū Ḥayyān was the poetry collection of Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā, the relationship between the two men subsequently becoming strained. The reason for this is unclear, although al-Shawkānī in *al-Badr al-Ṭālī* hints at it possibly being the result of a rivalry between them.³⁸

1.3.2 His Students

Although Ibn Hishām's teachers were numerous, it seems that the number of his students was far larger. This was the result of his wide renown, as shown by the words of Ibn Khaldūn above, and similarly by those of al-Shawkānī in *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, where he states:³⁹

He became a leading teacher, from whom people gained great benefit. He

³⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. II, p. 280.

³⁷ Al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. II, p. 288.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 401.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 120.

was without equal in this discipline. He comprehended its finer intricacies, and developed a talent for it not found with any other. His fame spread throughout the land, and his writings could be found in almost every region.

Amongst Ibn Hishām's students were:

- Muḥibb al-Dīn, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdulla ibn Hishām (750/1349-799/1397).

This is the son of Ibn Hishām. He studied with his father, as well as with a number of other scholars. Concerning him al-Suyūṭī states:⁴⁰ “During his era, he was unique regards the study of grammar.” Indeed, it has been reported from al-Bulqīnī that he was more knowledgeable than his father with regard to grammar.

- Ibn al-Mulaqqin, ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī al-Anṣārī al-Andalusī al-Miṣrī (723/1323-804/1401).

He excelled in many fields, until he became without equal. He wrote profusely on a wide range of subjects, his biographers stating that his works reached as

⁴⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. I, p. 148.

many as three hundred in number.⁴¹

- Al-Tabbānī, Jalāl ibn Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf (d. 793/1391).

He excelled in a number of disciplines, and wrote on jurisprudence, Ḥadīth, and Arabic. He was the leading scholar of Ḥanafī jurisprudence during his era. He studied Arabic with Ibn Hishām, Ibn ‘Aqīl, and al-Murādī.⁴²

- Al-Dijwī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān (d. 830/1427).

He studied with Ibn al-Murahhal, Ibn Hishām, and others. He became skilled in the Arabic language, such that students were keen to study it with him above others. Al-Suyūṭī narrates from Ibn Ḥajar that he paid particular attention to the *al-Alfiyya* of Ibn Mālik. In addition, he was known for his sense of humour.⁴³

- Al-Lakhmī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Shāfi‘ī (715/1315-790/1388).

He studied jurisprudence with al-Tibrīzī and al-Isnawī, and Arabic language with Ibn Hishām. He was taught by many scholars, and became skilled in

⁴¹ As-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw‘ al-Lāmi‘*, vol. VI, p. 100; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī‘*, vol. I, p. 508.

⁴² Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. I, p. 488.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 427.

jurisprudence and its principles, doctrine, and the Arabic language. He also became a leading teacher and muftī.⁴⁴

1.4 The Writings of Ibn Hishām

Ibn Hishām devoted his energy to writing on a number of disciplines, the number of his works reaching at least fifty. However, it was the Arabic language, with its various disciplines, and in particular grammar, which received the greatest share of his attention. His remarkable talent for expressing himself, his encyclopedic knowledge, and his extensive examination of detail may have had an effect on the variety and composition of his works; and indeed al-Suyūṭī in *Bughyat al-Wu'ā'*⁴⁵ and 'Umar Farrūkh in *Tārīkh al-Adab al-'Arabī'*⁴⁶ have alluded to this in some degree.

We shall mention here Ibn Hishām's most significant works, with a brief statement regarding each:⁴⁷

- *Mughnī al-Labīb 'an Kutub al-A'ārīb*

⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. I, p. 60; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā'*, vol. I, p. 427.

⁴⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā'*, vol. II, p. 69.

⁴⁶ Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 781.

⁴⁷ Regarding the works of Ibn Hishām, see Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. II, p. 309; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. X, p. 336; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā'*, vol. II, p. 69; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī'*, vol. I, p. 401; al-Najdī, Muḥammad ibn 'Abdulla. *al-Suḥub al-Wābila 'Alā Ḍarā'ih al-Ḥanābila*. Bakr Abū Zayd & 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Uthaymīn. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1996. vol. II, p. 662; Al-Ḍab', pp. 63ff; 'Umrān Shu'ayb, pp. 28ff;

Ibn Hishām mentions in the introduction to this work that he authored a book of this name at Mecca in 749/1348 but then lost it on his way to Egypt. He adds that he then returned to Mecca in 756/1355 and rewrote it.⁴⁸

This book is considered to be the greatest and most famous of Ibn Hishām's books, and the words of Ibn Khaldūn in his *al-Muqaddima* are a sufficient witness as to the work's excellence; he states:⁴⁹

At the present time, there has reached us in the Maghrib a systematic work (*dīwān*) from Egypt attributed to the Egyptian scholar, Jamāl-al-dīn b. Hishām. He treats in it all the rules governing vowel endings, both in general and in detail. He discusses the letters (sounds) and the individual words and sentences. He omits the repetitions found in most chapters of grammar. He called his work *al-Mughnī fī l-I'rāb*. He indicates all the fine points of the vowel endings in the Qur'ān and sets them down accurately in chapters and sections and according to basic norms all of which are very orderly. We have found in (the work) much information attesting to (the author's) great ability and abundant knowledge of grammar.

Scholars have paid great attention to this work, and have authored numerous commentaries on it, amongst the most important of which are:

⁴⁸ Ibn Hisham, *Mughnī al-labīb*, vol. I, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Ibn Khaldūn, vol. III, p. 324.

1. *Tanzīh al-Salaf ‘an Tamwīh al-Khalaf* by Ibn al-Sā’igh (d. 776/1375).⁵⁰
2. *Tuḥfat al-Gharīb* by al-Damāmīnī (763/1362-827/1424).⁵¹
3. *Muntahā Amal al-Adīb* by Ibn al-Mullā (937/1530- 1003/1595).⁵²
4. *Ghunyat al-Adīb* by Muṣṭafā al-Anṭākī (d. 1100/1688).⁵³
5. *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām ‘alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām* by al-Shummunī, which is the subject of this study.

Amongst those works concerned with explaining the poetry quoted by Ibn Hishām in *al-Mughni* are:

1. *Sharḥ Shawāhid al-Mughnī* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (849/1531-911/1505).⁵⁴
2. *Sharḥ Abyāt Mughnī al-Labīb* by ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Baghdādī (1030/1620-1093/1682).⁵⁵

In addition, Ibn Hishām himself composed two books explaining the

⁵⁰ Ḥājī Khalīfa. *Kashf al-Zunūn ‘an Asāmī al-Kutub wa al-Funūn*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992. vol. II, p. 1752.

⁵¹ Brockelmann, C. *Tārīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī*. Trans. by Maḥmūd Ḥijāzī et al. Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li l-Kitāb, 1993. vol. VI, p. 77.

⁵² Al-Ḥibshī, ‘Abdulla. *Jāmi‘ al-Shurūḥ wal Hawāshī*. 1st ed. Abu Dhabi: al-Majma‘ al-Thaqāfi, 2004. vol. VI, p. 7162.

⁵³ Brockelmann, vol. VI, p. 76.

⁵⁴ Edited by Kujār, Aḥmad Zāfir. Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1966.

⁵⁵ Edited by Rabāh, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz & Daqqāq, Aḥmad Yūsuf. Damascus: Maktabat Dār al-Bayān, 1973.

quotations used in *al-Mughnī*, but unfortunately they remain lost.

- *Awḍaḥ al-Masālik ilā Alfīyyat Ibn Mālik*⁵⁶

As is clear from its title, it is a commentary on Ibn Mālik's thousand-line poem on Arabic grammar, *al-Alfīyya*. It is considered one of the finest commentaries authored on the *al-Alfīyya*, and scholars have shown it high regard, making it the subject of further commentaries, amongst the most important of which are:

1. *Al-Taṣrīḥ bi-Maḍmūm al-Tawḍīḥ* by Khālīd al-Azharī (838/1434-905/1499).⁵⁷
2. *Raf' al-Sutūr wa l-Arā'ik* by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Sa'dī. (814/1411-880/1475).⁵⁸

- *Al-I'rāb 'an Qawā'id al-I'rāb*⁵⁹

This is a small book, no larger than a small treatise, yet in spite of its size it is of immense benefit. It is divided into four chapters:

1. The sentence and its rules.

⁵⁶ Edited by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1966.

⁵⁷ Sarkīs, Yūsif Ilyān *Mu'jam al-Maṭbū'āt al-'Arabiyya*. 1st ed. Cairo: Maṭba'at Sarkīs, 1928. vol. I, p. 811.

⁵⁸ al-Ḍab', p. 65.

⁵⁹ Brockelmann, vol. VI, p. 79; al-Ḍab', p. 63.

2. Prepositions and their complements.
3. The explanation of words needed by the grammarian.
4. Clarification of some important phrases.

This book has also been the subject of many commentaries; amongst them:

1. *Mūṣil al-Ṭullāb ‘ila Qawā'id al-I'rāb* by Khālid al-Azhārī (838/1434-905/1499).⁶⁰
2. *Ḥall Ma'āqid al-Qawā'id* by Aḥmad al-Zīlī (d. 1006/1597).⁶¹

This work has also been versified to help its memorisation by students. Amongst these versifications composed on it are:

1. *Tuḥfat al-Ṭullāb* by Aḥmad Ibn al-Hā'im (753/1353-815/1412).⁶²
2. *Al-I'rāb fī Naẓm Qawā'id al-I'rāb* by Mḥammad al-Barzanjī (1166/1753-1254/1838).⁶³

• ***Takhlīṣ al-Shawāhid wa Talkhīṣ al-Fawā'id***⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Edited by Mujāhid, 'Abdukarīm. Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1996.

⁶¹ Brockelmann, vol. VI, p. 81; Ḥājī Khalīfa, vol. I, p. 124.

⁶² Ḥājī Khalīfa, vol. I, p. 124; al-Ḥibshī, vol. II, p. 1398.

⁶³ al-Ḥibshī, vol. II, p. 1399.

⁶⁴ Edited by al-Ṣāliḥī, 'Abbās Mṣṭafā. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1986.

This book explains the quotations given in Ibn Hishām's commentary on the *Alfiyya* of Ibn Mālik, clarifying each quotation, and mentioning which poem it is taken from. It also elucidates the grammatical rules, or linguistic example that the verse contains, as well as any maxim, proverb, or simile mentioned in it.

- ***Sharḥ Qaṭr al-Nadā wa Ball al-Ṣadā***⁶⁵

This is an explanation of Ibn Hishām's own book: his brief introduction to grammar which he named *Qaṭr al-Nadā wa Ball al-Ṣadā*. This book has found wide acceptance as a primer in the subject since the time of its author up to the present,⁶⁶ because it combines both brevity and simplicity; the author also arranged the work extremely well. Furthermore, he mentioned many of the opinions of the different grammarians, and filled it with quotations taken from poetry, the Qur'ān, and the Ḥadīth literature. A further explanation of this commentary has been written by al-Sajā'ī.

- ***Sharḥ Shudhūr al-Dhahab***⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Edited by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn. Cairo, A H 1383.

⁶⁶ See al-Dab', p.77; 'Umrān, p. 32.

⁶⁷ Edited by 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn. Mecca: Maktabat al-Fayṣaliyya, n.d.

This is again a commentary on one of the author's own texts, named *Shudhūr al-Dhahab*, although it is slightly larger than the aforementioned *Qaṭr al-Nadā*. This commentary has outstanding academic value, being one of the finest works of its kind. Ibn Hishām gave the complete version in the commentary of the quotations given in the primary text. He explained and grammatically analysed every quotation, elucidated any uncommon words, and furthermore added numerous useful exercises for students. Several commentaries have been written on this book, amongst the most important of which is *Hāshiyat al-Amīr*.

- *Kitāb al-Alghāz*⁶⁸

This book was written by Ibn Hishām for the library of al-Malik al-Kāmil. It contains a miscellany of grammatical issues, most of which are obscure and complicated, such that they resemble puzzles (*alghāz*). In addition it includes jokes and literary witticisms.

- *Sharḥ Qaṣīdat Bānat Su‘ād*⁶⁹

This book was written by Ibn Hishām as an explanation of the famous poem by

⁶⁸ Edited by al-Jabr, Muwaffāq Fawzī. Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1997.

⁶⁹ Edited by al-Ṣabāḥ, ‘Aḥmad. Beirut: al-Matab al-‘Ālamī li l-Ṭibā‘h wa l-Nashr, 1996.

Ka‘b ibn Zuhayr known as the *al-Burda*, composed in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad. A supplementary elucidation of Ibn Hishām’s commentary has been authored by al-Baghdādī. The commentary is primarily grammatical and morphological in nature, containing many of the opinions mentioned in his grammatical works, whether they be his own or those of other scholars.

- *Talkhīṣ al-Intiṣāf min al-Kashshāf*⁷⁰

This is a summary of Ibn al-Munayyir al-Mālikī’s *al-Intiṣāf min al-Kashshāf*, in which the author criticizes al-Zamakhsharī on certain points given in the latter’s brilliant work, *al-Kashshāf*.

In addition, there are many writings by Ibn Hishām that discuss specific grammatical issues, rather than being general works on grammar such as the major works mentioned above. Amongst these writings are:⁷¹

1. *Risāla fī Intiṣāb (lughatan) wa (faḍlan) wa (ayḍan) wa l-Kalām ‘alā (halumma jarran).*
2. *Risāla fī Mas’alat (Inna raḥmata-llāhi qarībun min al-muḥsinīn).*
3. *Al-Mabāḥith al-Marḍiyya al-Muta‘alliqa bi Man al-Sharṭiyya.*
4. *Risāla fī Kāna wa Akhawātihā.*

⁷⁰ Brockelmann, vol. III, p. 266.

⁷¹ See ‘Umrān, pp. 32ff.

5. *Risāla fī Aḥkām (law) wa (ḥattā).*

CHAPTER 2 A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF AL-SHUMUNNĪ

2.1 Section 1: The Age of al-Shumunni (9th Century AH)

2.1.1 Political Life

Al-Shumunnī was born in 801/1399 and died in 872/1468, and thus lived from the beginning of the ninth century AH until the start of its last third. During this period of history, Egypt—which was the country where al-Shumunnī was born and died—was under the rule of the Burjī Mamlūks, whose state was founded on the ruins of that of the Baḥrī Mamlūks. The Burjī Mamlūks—by which name they are known—are distinguished from their Baḥrī predecessors by the fact that the Burjis were descended from the Circassians; unlike the Baḥris (whose rule lasted from 648/1250 until 784/1382), whose origins were Turkish and Khawārizmian.⁷²

⁷² See Muir, W. *The Mameluke or Slave Dynasty of Egypt 1260-1517 A.D.* London: Smith, Elder, & Co, 1896. p. 5; *The Legacy of Islam*, 2nd edition, ed. J. Schacht and C. Bosworth, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. p. 121.

2.1.1.1 The Birth and Growth of the Burjī Mamlūks

Discussion of the rise and formation of the Burjī Mamlūks is strongly linked to the nature of the rule of the Baḥris, who preceded them, and the manner of their authority and control. This has already been alluded to in previous chapter, dealing with Ibn Hisham.⁷³ There it was mentioned that the age of the Baḥrī Mamlūks is best described as being factional, in which influence and dominion were shared. The situation was the same for their inheritors, the Burjī Mamlūks, although things were now even more difficult than before. With the passing of time and the extension of their rule, the Mamlūks had become deeply divided and their disputes had grown. Therefore holding the reins of power was no easy matter; and controlling the army required extra effort, in addition to the understanding and intelligence necessary for a leader to control affairs. This is particularly true as the Mamlūks strongly believed that they were all equal as regards their origin, upbringing, and development. There was no distinction between one slave and another except on the basis of their individual characteristics, such as bravery, intelligence, skill at using weapons, and ability in exploiting the circumstances. As long as this was the case, all, or most, Mamlūks believed that they had a lawful right to attain power. Every Mamlūk was ambitious, no matter how low his rank or how insignificant his status; he was always looking to the day when he would become a great emir, and hence would be able to use his talents in taking ultimate

⁷³ See: p. 2 above.

control, just as other Sultans had done before.⁷⁴

Another important step towards the emergence of the Burjī Mamlūks came during the reign of Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn. He wanted to form a new group of Mamlūks, who would be loyal only to him, would be linked to him alone and not to any of his rivals, and furthermore would differ in their origins from the other Mamlūk groups. He chose for this the Circassian peoples who were spread out to the north of the Caspian Sea and the east of the Black Sea.⁷⁵ Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn took many of these Mamlūks, al-Maqrīzī stating that their number reached as many as 3700.⁷⁶ He himself supervised their education and their schooling in the arts of fighting and the use of weapons in their various forms. Then he began promoting them to high offices and important positions within his kingdom. He hinted at the honour which he wished to bestow on them when he declared that he wanted them to be a protective fortress for him and his children; this showed the great attention he paid to them, and his strong desire to favour them.⁷⁷

As for their being named Burjī Mamlūks, this came from the fact that al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn lodged them all in the towers (*abrāj*, s. *burj*) of the Citadel, and hence gave them the name al-Burjiyya.⁷⁸ When Sultan Qalāwūn died, and his son al-Ashraf Khalīl succeeded him, he continued his father's practise of owning large

⁷⁴ 'Āshūr, *al-ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 333.

⁷⁵ 'Āshūr, Sa'īd. *Miṣr wa l-Shām fī ʿAṣr al-Ayyūbiyyīn wa l-Mamlūkī*. Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabiyya, n.d. p. 241. Ayalon, D., "The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 69, No. 3. (Jul. – Sep. 1949), p. 136.

⁷⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī. *al-Sulūk li Ma'rifaṭ Duwal al-Mulūk*. 1st ed. by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1997. vol. II, p. 218.

⁷⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, p. 48.

⁷⁸ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. II, p. 218; Muir, p. 5

numbers of Circassian Mamlūks and showing them his favour.⁷⁹

It should be mentioned, with regard to the Burjī Mamlūks, that when Sultan Qalāwūn lodged them in the towers of the Citadel he prohibited them from leaving and going into Cairo and subsequently mixing with the general masses. However when his son, al-Ashraf Khalīl, succeeded him, he allowed them for the first time to leave their towers and go into the city, on condition that they did so only during the day, and that they returned before nightfall and slept in the Citadel. This caused the Burjī Mamlūks to mix with the general populace of the city, as well as with the other groups from amongst the Turkish Mamlūks. The Burjī Mamlūks thus became exposed to the conflicts and disputes which were befalling that era.⁸⁰

2.1.1.2 The Establishment of the Burjī Mamlūk State

The seeds of the Burjī Mamlūk state go back to the time when they showed their wrath at the murder of their master and teacher, al-Ashraf Khalīl. This rage did not subside until they had taken revenge for his murder by killing those who had plotted against him. Thereafter, in 693/1293, they declared al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn Sultan, despite his young age.⁸¹ From this time onwards, their influence and power increased, as is demonstrated by the battle which broke out between the Burjī Mamlūks and Sultan Katbugha, as mentioned in the historical

⁷⁹ ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 144.

⁸⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I‘tibār*, vol. III, p. 48; ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 144.

⁸¹ Ibn Taghri Bardi, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. VIII, pp. 19,20.

sources. The Emir Katbugha laid siege to the Citadel, which represented the stronghold of the Burjī Mamlūks, and cut off the water running to it, in an attempt to humiliate and subjugate them. In response, the Burjī Mamlūks came down from the Citadel, showing great bravery, and fought the Emir and his supporters in a ferocious battle, something which he did not expect, until the Turks fled headlong, out of fear of the Burjī Mamlūks. Thus they achieved a unique victory over the Turks, and inflicted defeat upon the Emir Katbugha and his supporters.⁸²

Consequently, the Turkish, Baḥrī Mamlūks began paying serious attention to the increasing growth in Burjī Mamlūk influence. They knew that if the Burjī Mamlūks took control of the Sultanate, their own power might decline or even disappear. Similarly, they were certain that the Emir Barqūq was the best placed of the Mamlūks to seize the opportunity to usurp the Sultanate. This was due to his having advanced in military rank amid rivalries and violent struggles until his influence and authority had become unparalleled, and also due to the traits of leadership and authority that he possessed. Therefore they began plotting to assassinate him before he could take power. Certain emirs cooperated in this regard; however Barqūq discovered the details of the plot, and quickly captured its leaders and exiled them. It is as if he thereby put an end to the fierce struggles and the rivalries which had broken out between the various groups of Mamlūks, with their different races and loyalties; having thus done away with his competitors, he

⁸² ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 145.

was able to gain control of the Sultanate.⁸³

The Burjī Mamlūk state was thereby established, and it continued thereafter for 134 years (784-923/1382-1517); twenty-five Sultans succeeding one another during that period. The last of these was Sultan al-Ashraf Qānṣawh al-Ghūrī, who was killed in the battle between him and the Ottoman Sultan Selīm I at Marj Dābiq,⁸⁴ considered a decisive battle in the history between the Mamlūks and the Ottomans.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the Mamlūk era, and especially that of the Burjī Mamlūks, contained a historical oddity seldom ever to be repeated; this being that a group of slaves, or of slaves of slaves, took power and continued to rule for all this length of time. William Muir spoke of this in his book about the Mamlūks, saying:⁸⁵

We search in vain for a parallel in the history of the world. Slaves have risen on their masters and become for the moment dominant. But for a community of purchased bondsmen, maintained and multiplied by a continuous stream of slaves bought, like themselves and by themselves, from Asiatic salesmen; such a community ruling at will over a rich country with outlying lands,—the slave of to-day the Sovereign of to-morrow,—the

⁸³ ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 157; Ayalon, D., “The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom”, pp. 139-41.

⁸⁴ Ibn Zunbul, Aḥmad al-Rammāl. *Ākhirat al-Mamlūk*. Edited by ‘Abd al-Mun‘im ‘Āmir. Cairo: al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li l-Kitāb, 1998. p. 103.

⁸⁵ Muir, p. 215.

entire governing body of the same slavish race; that such a state of things should hold good for two centuries and a half, might at first sight seem incredible. But it is the simple truth of the Mameluke dynasty during the fourteenth centuries.

It should also be noted that the hereditary nature of the Sultanate during the Baḥrī Mamlūk era was not common to the Burjī Mamlūks; rather, most of their rulers were leaders in the army who gained power through struggle, and kept it through dictatorship. The success of a Sultan at ruling was dependent upon his success at controlling the chief emirs, and at playing one group of Mamlūks against another.⁸⁶

As for the regions that were under their control, the Mamlūks in general, whether they be Baḥrī or Burjī, inherited the lands held by the Ayyubids, whose state, in addition to Egypt, included Greater Syria, and extended eastwards as far as the Euphrates river in Iraq. However, controlling this region was by no means easy, and troubles and unrest raged from time to time, either amongst the Mamlūks themselves, or between the Mamlūks and those neighbouring them. This was particularly the case in Greater Syria; for although it was nominally under the control of the Mamlūk Sultans, hardly a period existed that was without unrest. Indeed, no Sultan would feel at ease until he had received the support of the Syrian

⁸⁶ See 'Āshūr, *al-ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī*, pp. 158,59; Petry, C. *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt's Waning as a Great Power*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1994. p. 88.

emirs that were under the authority of the Mamlūk Sultanate, because of the influence and power that they enjoyed.⁸⁷

It is necessary to mention here the danger which threatened the Burjī Mamlūk state from the east; that being the danger of the Tartars under the leadership of Tamerlane. From the beginning of the Burjī Mamlūk era, right from the time of its founder, Barqūq, Tamerlane was fighting to expand and strengthen his kingdom. Thus in 795/1393 he captured Baghdad, having already conquered the lands that lay before it, and thus a clash between him and the Mamlūk state seemed imminent. Indeed some letters and threats passed between Tamerlane and Barqūq, but it seems that there were certain factors that led to the postponement of any conflict. Amongst these was the opening of a new Indian battle front by Tamerlane, as well as his becoming occupied with consolidating his authority in his expanding empire.⁸⁸ After returning from the Indian battle front, Tamerlane headed for Baghdad a second time, and from there to Greater Syria—Barqūq having died by this time—conquering one town after another. His army reached northern Syria and conquered Aleppo, before moving down to Hama, Homs, and Baalbek. In these regions he caused huge destruction and killed many people; so much so that the heads of those who had been killed were piled high together to form vast numbers of domes.⁸⁹ As for Damascus, however, it did not escape destruction. Although he originally entered it by way of peace treaty in the month

⁸⁷ ‘Āshūr, *Miṣr wa l-Shām*, pp. 348,49.

⁸⁸ Ibn Taghri Bardī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. XII, p. 261; Muir, p. 114.

⁸⁹ Gibbon, E., *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Edited and abridged by H. Mueller. New York: The Modern Library, 2003. p 1158.

of Rajab 803/March 1401, he subsequently went back on his word. He remained in the city for almost eighty days, leaving his troops free to steal and destroy whatever they wished. Following this he set fire to the entire city.⁹⁰

In 808/1405 Tamerlane died in Samarkand, and with his death his empire weakened and split apart; thus decreasing the grave danger which the Tatar posed to the Mamlūk state.⁹¹

2.1.1.3 The Decline and Collapse of the Mamlūk state

The Mamlūk state stayed strong and united, like any other state in the prime of its youth, overcoming the troubles and dangers surrounding it, until decrepitude and weakness, which is inevitable in the history of any state, started appearing. Then it was not long before it became a part of history, having previously been the one making it.

If we wish to look for the first signs of decline, we have to mention Sultan Qaytbāy, considered one of the most outstanding of the Circassian Mamlūk leaders, and the one who stayed in power the longest—the period of his rule lasting twenty nine years. Not only this, he was also known for his leadership qualities, the like of which are hardly found in another Sultan; as is attested by the

⁹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. II, pp. 50ff.

⁹¹ Hitti, P., *The Arabs: A Short History*, p. 249.

historian Ibn Iyās, author of the book *Bada'i' al-Zuhūr*.⁹² Despite this, the internal and external problems were overwhelming. Internally, the economic and social situation started weakening and collapsing. One of the main reasons for this—in addition to administrative corruption—was a profusion of diseases, epidemics and natural disasters; such that the great historian al-Maqrīzī described the situation by stating:⁹³

Ruination has afflicted all the villages of Egypt; and with it, things are at a standstill, markets are stagnant, profits are small, and suffering is universal; you can hardly find anyone who does not complain about the bad age he is living in.

However, it was the external danger, in particular the one coming from the north, as the authority of the Ottomans began to increase, which proved to be the decisive reason for the fall of the Mamlūk empire. All of this was happening as Sultan Qaytbāy was reaching old age, being over eighty by this time, and what was to happen forewarned of the distressing end which the Mamlūk Sultans were soon to face. After Qaytbāy, a number of Sultans took power, each one remaining only for a short period, ending with his murder or imprisonment. As a result, the leading emirs were frightened of becoming Sultan, and no one, not even the

⁹² Ibn Iyās, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Badā'i' al-Zuhūr fī Waqā'i' al-Duhūr*. Edited by Bāwl Kālah and others. Istanbul: Jam'iyyat al-Mustashriqīn al-Almāniyya, 1931-1936. vol. III, p. 317.

⁹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. VI, p. 511.

leading emirs, wanted the position, fearing a terrible fate.⁹⁴ Finally, the position of Sultan was assumed by Qānṣawh al-Ghūrī, the strongest emir, and the one most worthy of becoming Sultan; although he did not accept it initially, and when he finally did, it was only on condition that the rest of the emirs would not try to harm him should they wish to remove him.⁹⁵ This illustrates the state to which the Sultanate had fallen by this time.

Sultan al-Ghūrī rushed into dealing with matters with total determination and courage—despite being sixty years old when becoming Sultan—and spared no effort in defending and maintaining his kingdom. However, this aging state could not provide the resistance required in dealing with the prevailing circumstances. There was the increasing strength of the Portuguese, whose fleets began crossing the seas that were under Mamlūk control, until—following a number of naval battles with the Mamlūk fleet—the Portuguese themselves gained control of the maritime trade routes in the Arabīan Sea and the Indian Ocean. As a result, the control of trade passed from the Mamlūks to the Portuguese.⁹⁶

However, an even greater danger for the Mamlūk state came from the north; from the Ottomans, who had completed their occupation of Asia Minor and the Balkans, and who were now looking toward the east and the south. As for the east, the Ottoman Sultan Selīm I was intent upon attacking the Safavids in Persia and Iraq, and this he did, gaining a great victory over the Safavid Shah Ismā‘īl at

⁹⁴ ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 157.

⁹⁵ Ibn Iyās, vol. IV. p. 4.

⁹⁶ Petry, p. 58.

the Battle of Chaldiran in 920/1514. After a number of battles between the two sides, the Ottomans gained control of al-Jazīra, Mosul, and Diyār Bakr. This meant that the Ottoman state now bordered the Mamlūk state,⁹⁷ and as a result, a confrontation between the young Ottoman and the older Mamlūk states now seemed to be only a matter of time. Sultan al-Ghūrī was aware of this bitter reality, and this opinion was confirmed when news came of the preparations and massing of troops which Sultan Selīm was undertaking near to the Mamlūk border.⁹⁸

However, more problematic for Sultan al-Ghūrī than this external buildup of troops was the internal situation of the state, which was riddled with corruption. The negligence of the Mamlūks with regard to the affairs of state intensified; thus they committed all kinds of abuses, such as looting, robbing, and assaulting its citizens; so much so that Sultan al-Ghūrī himself threatened to abdicate.⁹⁹

Nevertheless, there was no alternative for Sultan al-Ghūrī other than to take matters firmly in hand and prepare to meet the Ottoman army on the border of his kingdom, before they themselves could invade and reach deep into his lands, or even into the heart of the capital, Cairo. Al-Ghūrī completed his preparations, and having left the Emir Ṭūmānbay as his deputy in Cairo during his absence,¹⁰⁰ headed towards Greater Syria and the city of Aleppo, which lay close to the place where the Ottomans had gathered. This was in spite of the letters sent by the

⁹⁷ Al-Ṣallābī, 'Alī Muḥammad. *al-Dawla al-'Uthmāniyya: 'Awāmil al-Nuhūd wa Asbāb al-Suqūṭ*. 1st ed. Beirut: Dār al-Bayāriq, 1999 pp. 299ff

⁹⁸ 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 194.

⁹⁹ Ibn Iyās, vol. IV. p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Muir, p. 197.

Ottoman Sultan Selīm to deceive al-Ghūrī, in an attempt to calm the latter and thus discourage him from advancing. Agents and elements disloyal to al-Ghūrī played a large role in these letters, in particular his deputy over Aleppo, Khāyir Bey, who was acting on behalf of Sultan Selīm.¹⁰¹

Al-Ghūrī's army headed for Aleppo, preparing to meet the Ottoman army and drive them back from the borders of the Mamlūk state, and thereby dash their hopes of conquering any part of it. However, the troupes of al-Ghūrī did not conduct themselves well when they reached Aleppo, but assaulted its citizens, forcing people out of their homes, and taking their women and children prisoner. As a result the people of Aleppo stood with Sultan Selīm against their own Sultan, due to the harm and oppression that had been done to them.¹⁰²

In Jumādā al-Ūlā 922/August 1516, the decisive battle took place between the two armies, the Ottomans under the leadership of Sultan Selīm, and the Mamlūks under Sultan Qānṣawh al-Ghūrī. It was known as the Battle of Marj Dābiq, after the place where it was fought, which itself takes its name from a nearby village belonging to the township of 'Azāz, north of Aleppo.¹⁰³ This was truly a decisive encounter, which changed the course of history.¹⁰⁴ The bravery and courage shown by the Mamlūks during the battle was—as has been mentioned by the historians of the age—beyond description; and they almost inflicted a severe defeat upon the Ottomans, had it not been for the intervention of certain

¹⁰¹ See Ibn Zunbul, pp. 81,82; Petry, pp. 37ff.

¹⁰² Ibn Zunbul, p. 91; al-Šallābī, p. 305.

¹⁰³ Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī. *Mu'jam al-Buldān*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d. vol. IV, p. 118.

¹⁰⁴ 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 198.

acts of treachery and conspiracy, which changed the course of the fight. In this regard, Khāyir Bey, a leading commander, appeared on the scene, spreading rumours through the ranks of the Mamlūks, even spreading a rumour that Sultan al-Ghūrī had died. Thus he succeeded in spreading an atmosphere of division and even flight amongst the ranks of al-Ghūrī's army. The betrayal and sense of defeat that Sultan al-Ghūrī felt, as he saw the fragments of his army fleeing, after having been on the point of victory, struck him a mortal blow;¹⁰⁵ at this point, one of his emirs came to al-Ghūrī—as one historian states—asking him to escape to Aleppo as the army of the Ottomans was almost upon him; at which point the Sultan fell dead from his horse due to the horror of the situation.¹⁰⁶

Thus ended this decisive, historic battle between the Mamlūks and the Ottomans. Following this the remnants of the defeated army began to filter into Aleppo, Syria, and then Egypt, entering Cairo amidst a wave of fear and horror, and unclear as to their fate.¹⁰⁷ The Mamlūk emirs then hastily chose Ṭūmānbay as Sultan, al-Ghūrī having previously appointed him as his deputy. However, realizing the enormity of the responsibility in such circumstances, and knowing the level of corruption and deterioration to which the Mamlūks had reached, Ṭūmānbay fiercely refused to accept the position; as did all the leading emirs, who had previously been fighting one another over it. In the end, Ṭūmānbay agreed to become Sultan, but only upon great insistence and after receiving assurances,

¹⁰⁵ See Ibn Zunbul, pp. 98ff; 'Āshūr, *al-ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 198.

¹⁰⁶ See Ibn Iyas, vol. V. p. 69; Ibn Zunbul, p. 103.

¹⁰⁷ Muir, p. 204.

accompanied by binding oaths, from the Mamlūk emirs that they would undertake no betrayal or treachery, and that they would give their obedience.¹⁰⁸

It was only a short time before news came that the Ottomans had taken possession of Greater Syria, and that they were now on their way to Egypt. In vain, the new Sultan, Ṭūmānbay, tried to incite the Mamlūks to rise up and defend their country, but it seems that defeat and apathy had seized their hearts. In addition, continuous acts of treachery were still being undertaken for the benefit of the Ottomans, placing Sultan Ṭūmānbay in a wholly unenviable position.¹⁰⁹ Still he did not surrender, despite the violent threats coming from Sultan Selīm, and despite being deserted by many of the Mamlūks. He resisted in the first battle, on the outskirts of Cairo, in Dhu l-Ḥijja 922/January 1517, and displayed a rare degree of bravery. However, when he saw himself alone on the battlefield, with only a small band of men, he chose instead to go into hiding and adopt a new tactic. He followed the path of resistance rather than direct confrontation, attacking the Ottoman troops by surprise; this actually had the greatest affect on the psychology of Sultan Selīm, such that he even felt regret at having ventured into Egyptian territory. However, this state of affairs did not persist, as in the end, Sultan Ṭūmānbay was arrested and killed; and with his death came the end of the Circassian Mamlūk state.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Iyas, vol. V. pp. 99,100; 'Āshūr, *al-ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p.200.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Iyas, vol. V. p. 134; Muir, p. 202.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Zunbul, pp. 128ff; 'Āshūr, *Miṣr wa l-Shām*, pp. 279ff.

2.1.2 Social Life

When talking about social life in Mamlūk society, we should start by acknowledging that we are speaking about a class society—in the fullest sense of the word—and one which was dependent upon the feudal system. It consisted of a number of classes, distinct from each other in terms of their features, characteristics, and outward appearances, and similarly with regard to the rights and duties pertaining to each.¹¹¹

There was a class of military rulers, who enjoyed all possible rights and privileges. The members of this group owned the arable land, upon which the economy of the country was based, and their sole duty was that of governance and administration. This class was itself composed of a number of sub-classes.

In contrast, the role of the subjects was restricted to production, payment of taxes, and being subjected repeatedly to extortion by their rulers, while having no role in the responsibilities of government. This class of subjects likewise consisted of various sub-classes. It is thus evident that there were clear differences between the social divisions within each of these two classes.¹¹²

As for the class of Mamlūks, the reasons for them being divided into many sub-classes are as follows:

Firstly, they were of different nationalities. Despite the majority of the

¹¹¹ See Farrūkh, vol. III, pp. 606; Qāsim, 15; Ashtor, E. A Social and Economic History of The Near East in The Middle Ages. 1st ed. London: Collins, 1976. p.168; Ayalon, D., "Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army --II" in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, vol. 15, No. 3. (1953), pp. 467ff.

¹¹² 'Āshūr, Sa'īd. *al-Mujtama' al-Miṣrī fī 'Aṣr Salāṭīn al-Mamālīk*. Cairo: Dār al-Nahḍa al-'Arabiyya, 1992. pp. 16ff.

Baḥrī Mamlūks being Turkish, and the majority of the Burjī Mamlūks being Circassian, this did not mean that there were not different races amongst the Mamlūks. They were, after all, slaves, and the slave market had flourished due to increasing demand, with slave traders competing vigorously.¹¹³

The second reason was the different merits, characteristics, and skills of each individual Mamlūk.

The third, and perhaps most important reason was their affiliation to a particular emir or commander, who had imported or bought them, they then entering into his ownership or coming under his command. For this reason, we find that the Mamlūks were usually identified by the name of their emir or commander, such as the *Ashrafis*, who were named after Sultan al-Ashraf, and the *Zāhiris*, named after Sultan al-Zāhir.¹¹⁴

The Mamlūk Sultans paid great attention to their *Mamlūks*, and exerted considerable efforts with regard to their education and upbringing. After their initial examination, and having made sure of their safety and good health, each Mamlūk was lodged on the floor of the Citadel specific to his nationality; thereby, only *Mamlūks* of common origin, or those brought from one country, would reside within any one of the floors specified for Mamlūks in the Citadel. Then a group of specialists would assume responsibility for the education and upbringing of these *Mamlūks*. Sultans, emirs, and commanders would look upon their *Mamlūks* in a

¹¹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. III, p. 303; ‘Āshūr, *Miṣr wa l-Shām*, p. 168; Muir, pp. 3,4.

¹¹⁴ Muir, p. 218.

fatherly manner, treating them generously with regard to wealth and sustenance; the reason being that each leader considered his followers a reserve and a stronghold in which he might find protection in times of hardship.¹¹⁵

When a Mamlūk grew up and reached the age of maturity, he would be taught horsemanship and the arts of war. Having finished his education, he would leave his lodgings in the Citadel and would pass into the royal service, moving up rank after rank until he became an emir.¹¹⁶

It is worth mentioning that the rulers, who were *Mamlūks*, were foreigners with respect to the country and its people, and thus the link between them and the people was very weak. They remained a separate class from the other inhabitants in Egypt and Greater Syria, not marrying among them, but rather choosing wives and slave girls brought from amongst their own people by the slave traders. Likewise, the Mamlūk government was always careful to avoid any *Mamlūk* being sold to an owner from outside the Mamlūk community, i.e. to one of the native citizens.¹¹⁷ Each community thus led its social life in isolation from the other.

The Mamlūks ruled the country as a distinguished military class, taking exclusive control of the government and affairs of war. The members of this class bore the burden of defending the country against any foreign dangers, on the one hand, and of protecting the Sultan's throne against any internal dangers, on the other. It continually strengthened itself with the *mamlūks* brought by the slave

¹¹⁵ Al-Qalqashandī. Aḥmad ibn 'Alī. *Ṣubḥ al-A'shā fī Ṣinā'at al-Inshā*. Edited by 'Abd al-Qādir Zakkār. Damascus: Dār al-Nashr, 1981. vol. XI, p. 172; 'Āshūr, *al-Mujtama' al-Miṣrī*, pp. 19,20.

¹¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. III, p. 302; 'Āshūr, *al-Mujtama' al-Miṣrī fī*, p. 21.

¹¹⁷ Al-Suyūfī, *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. II, p. 232; Muir, p. 218.

traders. They looked at the local inhabitants as inferior, and thus the latter would not be allowed to participate in military life; and as for the affairs of government, any participation by them would only be limited to the extent allowed by the Mamlūks. Accordingly, the local inhabitants considered the Mamlūks only to be a group of dominating foreigners, especially since they derived their power from the Abbasid caliph, who resided with them, but was divest of any real authority.¹¹⁸

Looking forward, we find the emergence of the group consisting of the children of the Mamlūks; those who were not affected by slavery, but who were born free, in an environment different to that of their parents. This category was known as *Awlād al-Nās* (literally ‘the Children of People’). Their social position was lower than that of the Mamlūks themselves, (i.e. those who were actually brought from their homelands as slaves, and who had a specific, prescribed upbringing).¹¹⁹ As for their children, the *Awlād al-Nās*, for the most part they turned away from the political and military life which their fathers had lived, instead choosing for themselves a life of peace and gentleness. Some of them participated in the cultural life of their time, as was the case with a large number of brilliant historians that appeared from their ranks, amongst them Ibn Aybak, Ibn Duqmāq, the great historian Ibn Taghrī Bardī, Ibn Iyās, and others. Some scholars attribute this to the fact that the Mamlūks did not have a normal family life.¹²⁰ This is because their presence in society was not based upon the family, as the primary

¹¹⁸ Qāsim, p. 19; ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama‘ al-Miṣrī*, pp. 28,29.

¹¹⁹ Qāsim, p. 22, 23.

¹²⁰ ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama‘ al-Miṣrī*, pp. 126,127.

social building block; rather it depended upon the individual strength of each emir, as represented by the *mamlūks* who were supporting and helping him in his struggle against the other emirs. The emirs would give their complete care and attention to their *mamlūks*; so much so that the emir would only even eat his food with his *mamlūks*. Thus the Mamlūk emirs would not have enough time to take care of their own children; rather, they would leave them to be brought up by the women, and in palaces far away from military life. As a result, the children of the emirs would pass their time practicing sports such as horsemanship and ball games, or frequenting study circles. Some would also become soldiers in the Mamlūk Army. On the other hand, the wealth which they inherited from their parents, or the feudal estates granted them by the Sultans, enabled them to live a life of ease and pleasure, such that they could mix with the governing class, even though they lived on the margins of that class.¹²¹

As for the grandchildren of the Mamlūks, they occupied a lower social position than the *Awlād al-Nās*, who were their parents. Thus within a short time they would be absorbed by society, becoming indistinguishable from it within two or three generations, interacting fully with public life, and detaching themselves from the governing class.¹²²

If we move to the second class of the society—that of the native citizens—we find that it was composed of many sub-classes. There were the group known as

¹²¹ ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 319; ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama‘ al-Miṣrī*, pp. 19ff; Ayalon, D., “Studies on the Structure of the Mamluk Army --II” in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, vol. 15, No. 3. (1953), p. 456.

¹²² Qāsim, p. 24.

the Turban Wearers (Ahl al-‘Imāma), which comprised the senior officials, jurists, scholars, poets, and scribes. This category enjoyed certain exclusive privileges, particularly the jurists and men of religion; the reason perhaps being, as some believe, that the Mamlūks felt themselves strangers to the country and thus in need of finding some support for their rule, which would help them obtain the approval of the locals. For this they found no other group than that of the scholars, given the influence and strength held by the men of religion.¹²³ Whether the Turban Wearers worked in the jobs appointed them by the Sultans, or were teaching in one of the various schools scattered throughout the country, they had to cooperate with the Mamlūks. The Turban Wearers enjoyed a comfortable, easy life, and acquired enormous wealth, ensured them by the many religious endowments that were under their supervision.¹²⁴ Nevertheless this status did not stop some Sultans and emirs from criticizing and harming them; it was as if the Mamlūks were not happy that a group of the native inhabitants should share with them certain privileges, such as riding horses. On many occasions, groups of Mamlūks descended into the streets of Cairo in order to assault the scholars and those wearing turbans, and bring them down from their horses, which they would then steal away.¹²⁵

We should mention here that the term Turban Wearers does not mean that this category was the only one whose followers wore turbans on their heads;

¹²³ Al-Harithy, H., "The Patronage of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, 1310-1341" in *Mamlūk Studies Review*, vol. IV 2000, p. 219; Qāsim, p. 24; ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama’ al-Miṣrī*, pp. 35,36.

¹²⁴ See Ashtor, p. 322; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, Abū al-Maḥāsin Yūsuf. *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr fī Madā al-Ayyām wa l-Shuhūr*. 1st ed. by Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn ‘iz al-Dīn. Beirut: ‘Ālam al-Kutub, 1990. vol. I, p. 94.

¹²⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. V, p. 298; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr*, vol. I, p. 104; ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p.321.

rather, their turbans were larger in size than those of others; a fact which corresponds with the concept of class present in that era.¹²⁶

If we move from this sub-class of the native citizens to that of the merchants, they occupied a level not far from that of the Sultans. This is due to the immense wealth that they enjoyed; wealth which the Sultan may need in times of hardship. The geographical location of the Mamlūk state was such that it overlooked the most important commercial routes of the time, both those over land and sea. It lay between the continents of Asia and Africa, and overlooked a large part of the Mediterranean Sea, while dominating its eastern and south-eastern regions—the Mediterranean Sea being the vital water crossing for trade between the three surrounding continents. These and other geographical advantages allowed the merchants of the Mamlūk state to gain vast sums of wealth.¹²⁷ However, this did cause a separate problem for the merchants, as they became a target for the covetousness of the Sultans and influential emirs. From time to time they faced having their wealth seized, in addition to having heavy taxes imposed upon them.¹²⁸ Indeed, some emirs exceeded all reasonable limits in this regard, as shown by the story of the Emir Arghun Shah, related by the great historian al-Maqrīzī. This emir forced the merchants to purchase from him the cows which he had unlawfully seized from people. What is more, he forced the merchants to travel, escorted by his tyrannical guards, to the site where the cows were gathered,

¹²⁶ Qāsim, p. 25.

¹²⁷ ‘Āshūr, *Miṣr wa l-Shām*, pp. 285, 286.

¹²⁸ ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama' al-Miṣrī*, pp. 42, 43.

and then to pay the price which he saw fit. The situation reached such extremes that some merchants longed for death so as to be free from the fines and the financial losses they suffered, and from the curses, insults, and beatings meted out to them by their oppressors.¹²⁹

We come now to a class of people that constitutes a large section of that society, one only exceeded in size by the class of peasants. This class was called the *‘Awāmm* (the Common Folk), and contained a broad band of people, consisting of sellers, tailors, water carriers, hirers and drivers of pack animals, craftsmen, tradesmen, as well as the poor and the destitute. There is no doubt that this class did not enjoy the same wealth and luxury as the aforementioned classes; rather, the members of this class often lived in a state of misery and distress when compared to the other, wealthy classes. In addition, this class was the one most likely to be affected by adversities such as famines, epidemics, and natural disasters. Therefore they would often turn to begging, and even robbery and looting, should the country be faced with natural disasters, or if it was gripped by riots or unrest.¹³⁰

It only remains for us to mention the class that represented the largest section of the society, yet which, at the same time, was looked at with disdain and scorn; this being the class of hard-pressed peasants, overburdened by the excessive taxes imposed on them, and the many injustices done to them by tyrannical rulers. Their situation was so deplorable that during that era the term *‘fallāḥ*’ (peasant)

¹²⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. VII, p. 79.

¹³⁰ See Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. XIV, p. 328; 44ff; ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamālīkī*, p.322.

referred to that weak and helpless individual, who was not safe from the tyranny of the Sultans and influential emirs, nor from the continuous raids of the Bedouins against their villages and the rest of the countryside.¹³¹

2.1.2.1 Aspects of Social Life

2.1.2.1.1 Parties and Feasts

Despite the difficulties and crises which the common people faced, especially during the Burjī Mamlūk era, this did not stop them from enjoying themselves, and from entertaining and amusing themselves in various ways. This spirit pervaded the lives of the natives both in Egypt and Greater Syria, although it must be admitted that life was not as pleasurable as it was during the days of the Baḥrī Mamlūks. This is because of the general level of deterioration of the country and the corruption, which had become prevalent and widespread, not to mention the numerous catastrophes which had struck the nation.

It was common for people to go to gardens, parks, and the shores of the river Nile. They would often hire boats and take with them musical instruments for their amusement and pleasure. Similarly, life in the cities during that era was renowned for its boisterous celebrations, both in terms of private family parties and popular festivals. The most prominent of the family parties was that

¹³¹ ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama‘ al-Miṣrī*, pp, 56ff.

celebrating marriage, when it was common practice to organize lavish banquets, and to bring female singers and female drummers. There were also private parties undertaken for the celebration of births and circumcisions.¹³²

As for the popular festivals, there were a great number of feasts and ceremonies celebrated during the Mamlūk era. Some of these were connected with religion and beliefs, while others were national celebrations. The celebrations and festivals of the Muslims each had their own manifestations, and were each connected with certain specific customs and traditions. Likewise, Jewish and Christians citizens had their own festivals, some of which, particularly those of the Christians, were quite an attractive social feature.

If we begin by mentioning the religious festivals of the Muslims, the most important of them were those related to the month of Ramaḍān, with festivities commencing with the sighting of the new moon. The famous traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa describes for us how people greeted the new moon of Ramaḍān, having seen this for himself while passing through Egypt on his long journey. While it is true that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa died four or five years before the beginning of the Burjī Mamlūk state, such customs are unlikely to have disappeared in the time just after the Baḥrī Mamlūk era. Returning to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's description, he states that it was the custom that the jurists and notables of the city would gather after the afternoon prayer on the day of the twenty ninth of Sha'bān (the month preceding Ramaḍān)

¹³² Qāsim, p. 93; Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 883.

at the house of the chief judge. On the door of the house stood the Head of the Turban Wearers, having a very pleasant appearance, who would greet the scholars and notables. Once they had all arrived, they would set out, followed by all the people in the city—men, women and children. They would stop at an elevated place outside of the city, this being the site where they waited for the new crescent to appear. The site would be furnished with carpets and cushions, and the chief judge and those with him would sit there awaiting the new moon. They would return to the city after the sunset prayer, bearing candles, torches, and lanterns.¹³³

As for the nights of Ramaḍān, the markets would be aglow in celebration of the occasion. Al-Maqrīzī describes for us in his book, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*,¹³⁴ one of the markets which would do particularly well during Ramaḍān, due to the volume of festive candles—made especially for use in processions, the weight of each candle being at least 10 pounds—which would be hired out or sold during this month. There were even candles that had to be transported on carts due to their great weight. These were used in the children's procession that would go around the markets and the districts during the nights of Ramaḍān.

At the end of Ramaḍān came 'Īd -al-Fiṭr (Lesser Bairam) one of the two main festivals of the Muslims, the other being 'Īd al-Aḍḥa (Greater Bairam). On 'Īd al-Fiṭr people would observe a public celebration, for which they would prepare food and drink during the last days of Ramaḍān. On the morning of the 'Īd

¹³³ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. I, p. 33, 34.

¹³⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. II, p. 462.

day they would go out to pray the 'Īd prayer in a large procession, repeating: "There is no god but Alla" and "Alla is greatest" until they reached the mosque. After the prayer, people would exchange 'Īd greetings and gifts, which would often take the form of sweets and cakes. Then they would go out, both men and women, to walk and enjoy themselves in gardens and squares. The same thing would take place on 'Īd al-Aḍḥā, coming two months and ten days after 'Īd al-Fiṭr. There was little difference between these two festivals, although 'Īd al-Aḍḥā was distinguished by the attention given to sacrificial offerings. People would occupy themselves with preparing the animals on the night preceding the 'Īd, and then slaughtering them and distributing their meat on the 'Īd day itself. During this 'Īd, and also during 'Īd al-Fiṭr, people would attach importance to visiting the graveyards, having returned from which they would turn their attention to amusement and pleasure.¹³⁵

One of the largest festivals, during the Mamlūk era, was that in celebration of the Prophet's Birthday (*mawlid*), during the month of Rabī' al-Awwal. Sultans were keen that their subjects should also participate in the festivities, which would start at the beginning of the month of Rabī' al-Awwal and continue until the twelfth of the month. It was customary for the Mamlūk Sultans to erect a huge tent for this occasion called the Birthday Tent. At the doors of this tent was placed a large leather basin filled with lemon juice and sugar. Servants stood around it, offering people cups of this juice. The official celebration would commence at

¹³⁵ See Ibn al-Hājj, Muḥammad al-Fāsī. *al-Madkhal*. 1st ed. by Ḥasan Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Āl. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Aṣriyya, 2005. vol. I, p. 242ff; 'Āshūr, *al-Mujtama' al-Miṣrī*, pp. 208-211.

noon on the twelfth, and continue until late into the night. The program would begin with Qur'ān recitation; then would come the turn of the preachers; then garments and money supplied by the Sultan and the emirs would be distributed. After the sunset prayer, tables offering different kinds of sweets were laid, after which singers would sing until a third of the way through the night. This was the official party; as for the generality of people, they celebrated the Prophet's birthday in their own manner, organizing parties in their own homes and exchanging gifts between them.¹³⁶

One festival unlike any other, and one exclusive to the capital of the Mamlūks, was that celebrating the procession of the Maḥmal. It was instigated by Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars in 675/1276, with the intention of informing people that the road between Egypt and the Hijāz was safe so that anyone who wanted to perform the Hajj Pilgrimage should neither delay nor fear. This festival took place twice a year, the first time in the month of Rajab, and the second in the month of Shawwāl.¹³⁷ What was meant by the Maḥmal (literally 'camel-borne litter'), was the placing of the Kiswa, or cloth covering of the Ka'ba, on the back of a beautifully adorned camel that would circulate the streets of Cairo. The Mamlūk Sultans would take a special interest in the Kiswa, as they were keen to portray a religious appearance and to show themselves as being in the service of the Two

¹³⁶ See al-Qalqashandī, vol. III, p.576; Ibn al-Hājj, vol. II, p. 5ff; 'Āshūr, *al-Mujtama' al-Miṣrī*, pp. 197-199.

¹³⁷ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. II, p. 76; 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamālīkī*, p. 331.

Holy Mosques (those in Mecca and Madina).¹³⁸ At this time of year, Egyptian society was particularly lively; those markets specializing in items required by the pilgrims would flourish, and emirs and *mamlūks* would prepare themselves for traveling with the pilgrim caravan. Ceremonies for the procession of the Maḥmal would begin three days before the camel commenced its tour; callers would roam the streets of Cairo informing people of the date of the Maḥmal procession. Thereupon, the merchants who owned the shops and markets lining the route of the procession would decorate their stores. On the day of the procession itself, crowds of people, young and old, men and women, would gather all along the route to see the procession pass through the streets of Cairo. At its head would be a group of Mamlūk cavaliers, wearing their distinctive uniforms, and carrying their equipment and weapons, displaying their skill at fighting with spears. Also in the procession would be a group of child *mamlūks* performing various acrobatics with spears while standing on the backs of their horses. The roars of the onlookers would be mixed with the bangs from the brass drums. If this celebration was in the month of Shawwāl, after completing its tour through Cairo, the procession would turn towards the Hijāz Road, headed by one of the leading emirs, and followed by whoever intended to perform the Hajj that year.¹³⁹

With regard to the festivals of the non-Muslim citizens, i.e. the Jews and the Christians, some of these were commemorated only by the members of one

¹³⁸ Qāsim, p. 100.

¹³⁹ See *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, vol. I, p. 58, 59; Ibn Taghrī Bardī *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. XVI, p 268; al-Qalqashandī, vol. IV, p. 59.

particular community, while with others the Muslims participated in the celebrations. Sources mention that the Jews celebrated numerous festivals, some of which were religious and others historical.¹⁴⁰ As for the festivals of the Christians, these were great in number. Sources indicate that they had seven major festivals and seven minor ones; this was aside from the religious celebrations, which some historians numbered as including more than one hundred and seventy festivals and feasts.¹⁴¹

Muslims used to celebrate with the Christians in some of their festivals. Amongst these was Christmas, for which the Egyptians would cook a dish called '*aṣīda*, made of flour, dates and ghee¹⁴². They would celebrate in a dazzling manner, competing in buying dyed candles, which they would hang in the markets and on the doors of shops. Al-Maqrīzī describes this phenomenon, saying:¹⁴³

We witnessed Christmas in Cairo and the rest of the land of Egypt as a splendid festival. Bright candles, colored with beautiful dyes, and wonderful statues are sold for it for an immeasurable amount of money; such that no one, high or low, remains who has not bought some for their children and families.

The same thing happened during Epiphany, with some Muslims participating with

¹⁴⁰ Al-Qalqashandī, vol. II, p. 463 ; Qāsim, p. 101.

¹⁴¹ Al-Qalqashandī, vol. II, pp. 453,54; Qāsim, p. 105.

¹⁴² Ibn al-Ḥājj, vol. II, p. 52.

¹⁴³ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. I, p.496.

the Christians in the baptism ceremony by immersing their own children in cold water.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, there was Maundy Thursday, on which Christians used to offer Muslims different kinds of refined lentils, fried fish, and colored eggs; a huge quantity of colored eggs being sold in the markets for this occasion. This festival was considered one of Egypt's most important celebrations during the Mamlūk era.¹⁴⁵

Finally, one of the major festivals celebrated universally during the Mamlūk era, and especially in Egypt, was the festival of the Nile Inundation. It derived its importance from the importance which Egyptians gave to the River Nile itself, the Nile being the foundation of Egyptian life. The celebration of this festival began when the level of the River Nile reached a particular height when measured at a certain location, known as al-Miqyās (the Nilometer), on al-Rawḍa Island. People were informed of its occasion, by the curtain of the main window of the Nilometer building being drawn. That night would be one of the most joyous nights in Cairo and Fustāṭ. People would illuminate such a huge number of lamps and candles that night would be turned into day. Leading emirs together with attendants from the royal palaces would distribute gifts to those normally given them during this festival. Then reciters would come and take turns in reciting the Qur'ān in the Dar al-Miqyās (House of the Nilometer), followed by singers and vocalists, who would continue throughout the night. On the following morning, the festivities would begin with the Sultan, or his deputy, descending from the

¹⁴⁴ Ibn al-Hājj, vol. II, p. 53.

¹⁴⁵ Qāsim, p. 106.

Citidel with the leading emirs from amongst the army commanders and notables of state in attendance. They would descend to the Nile and ride in boats adorned with colored flags and other decorations. Drums would be beaten and fireworks would be launched from the boats until the convoy reached the House of the Nilometer. Here a table was laid, replete with different sorts of grilled meats, sweets, and fruits, and no one was prevented from eating from it. Thereafter, the Sultan, or his deputy, would sit under the curtain of the Nilometer building, and distribute gifts and medals of honour to those normally given them on this occasion.¹⁴⁶

2.1.2.1.2 Trades and Crafts

Discussion of the trades and crafts common in the Mamlūk era helps us to understand a great deal about the social life of the people of that era, the nature of their way of life, and their customs and traditions.

The first thing that attracts one's attention is those industries dealing with food. The researcher may be astonished by the multitude of industries dealing with food which spread out everywhere during the Mamlūk era, and in particular in Egypt. It is sufficient to know that Ibn al-Ikhwa in his book *Ma'ālim al-Qurba fi Ahkām al-Hisba* enumerated seventeen crafts related to food, detailing each one

¹⁴⁶ See al- Qalqashandī, vol. III, p. 590; Ibn Duqmāq, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad. *al-Intiṣār li Wāsiyat 'Aqd al-Amṣār*. Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, n.d. pp. 114,15; Qāsim, pp. 106ff.

and mentioning the guidelines set for those undertaking that craft.¹⁴⁷ From this we can ascertain a unique phenomenon within Egyptian society during the Mamlūk era: many of the inhabitants and, particularly the poor, did not use to take their meals in their homes, but rather in eateries. Indeed, according to ‘Āshūr some western travelers estimated the number of restaurants and public kitchens at that time to be more than twelve thousand in Cairo alone.¹⁴⁸ In his famous work, *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I‘tibār*, al-Maqrīzī cites an event which illustrates this phenomenon. He mentions a market known as Sūq al-Zahūma; the market inspector came to the market—as was his custom, for the purpose of inspection and control—and discovered a shop owner who had various kinds of birds prepared for eating, yet which had developed a bad smell due to negligence. The number of these birds reached one hundred and thirty four thousand. The inspector punished the shop owner and vilified him for his negligence.¹⁴⁹ What interests us about this event is the great abundance of food that it indicates; whereby, this vast number of birds was in one shop, and constituted just one variety of food; what then about the rest of the market? Al-Maqrīzī also mentions in his book *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I‘tibār* that this market (Sūq al-Zahūma) had a kitchen exclusively for the Palace; each night during the month of Ramaḍān it would produce one thousand, two hundred pots, filled with different kinds of food, which would be distributed amongst the poor and needy. The customers of these restaurants and kitchens were, in the majority,

¹⁴⁷ Ibn al-Ikhwa, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad. *Ma‘ālim al-Qurba fī Aḥkām al-Ḥisba*. 1st ed. by Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 2001. p. 93ff

¹⁴⁸ ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama‘ al-Miṣrī*, p. 98.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I‘tibār*, vol. II, p.456.

the common people and the poor.¹⁵⁰ As for the rich, they used to send the food they wanted cooked to kitchens which specialized in this. These kitchens would cook the food, and then young boys would deliver it in covered pots, so as to protect it from the dust of the streets, and to keep it hidden from view.¹⁵¹

Turning to the manufacture of sweets, we find that it was widespread during this era, some historians enumerating more than fifty kinds of sweet known at that time.¹⁵² There is no doubt that this great variety of sweets depended wholly upon the sugar industry. This was flourishing; the historian Ibn Duqmāq counting fifty eight kitchens for making sugar in Fustāṭ alone.¹⁵³ In connection with the sugar industry, it is worth mentioning al-Maqrīzī's observations concerning the manufacture of sugar statues. For these there was a separate market called Sūq al-Ḥalāwiyyīn (the Sweet Makers Market), as well as a special season of the year, during which time this market flourished. It was full of all different types and sizes of sugar statutes, made in the form of different animals.¹⁵⁴

Closely related to this was the excellence shown in manufacturing vessels and household utensils. These also had their own individual markets and shops. There were even certain cities known for their originality in this industry. In this regard, the famous traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa tells of his trip to the city of Baalbek,

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p.473.

¹⁵¹ Qāsim, p. 119.

¹⁵² Ibn al-Ikhwa, p. 121.

¹⁵³ Ibn Duqmāq, pp. 41ff.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. II, p.479.

saying:¹⁵⁵

Another industry at Ba‘labakk is the making of wooden vessels and spoons that have no equal in the world. . . Frequently they make a large dish, then make a second which fits into the hollow of the first, and another in the hollow of that, and so on to as many as ten, which anyone seeing them would imagine to be a single dish. In the same way with spoons, they make a series of ten, one within the hollow of the other, and make a leather covering for them. A man will carry this in his belt and, on joining in a meal with his friends, will take it out; those who see it think it to be a single spoon, whereupon he produces nine others from within it.

If we move from food to clothing, we find that the manufacture of fabrics, textiles, and anything linked to this industry, flourished greatly. The nature of the class society during that era played a large part in the diversification of this industry. Each class of society had its own conventions with regard to clothing and outward appearance. The class of the Mamlūk Sultans was especially interested in the elegance of their clothes, and paid particular attention to the ornamentation and grandeur of their processions. After this class, the other groups within society each had their own individual dress, which no other would share. Consequently, different markets rose up in the country to serve the clothing trade, starting with

¹⁵⁵ *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, ed. H.A.R. Gibb, vol. I, p. 117.

the spinning industry, then the textile, and then the dyeing industry. Similarly there was a group which specialized in silk and silk manufacture. Attached to these craft markets were a group of shops considered subsidiary to the clothing industry, i.e. those dealing with repairing damaged or defective clothing. In addition, there were shops which specialized in embroidering clothes, as there were also shops for workers known as *farrā'īyyūn* (furriers), whose work it was to attach pieces of fur to clothing.¹⁵⁶

One profession specializing in adornment which helps cast light on some of the social customs was that of the barber and of those dealing with adornment—since there was the barber (*ḥallāq*) and the embellisher (*muzayyin*). It appears that the embellisher used to undertake tasks different from those carried out by the barber. Thus the embellisher, for example, would carry out circumcisions and ear piercings, for those wishing to wear earrings, while the barber would cut people's hair, and trim their moustaches and beards. Also worth mentioning is the existence of certain traveling barbers, who would wander the streets carrying mirrors on their chests, cutting people's hair wherever and whenever they were asked to do so; on occasion, this may also have been done inside mosques.¹⁵⁷

2.1.2.1.3 Famine and Epidemics

Historians agree that there was a great deal of similarity in almost all aspects of

¹⁵⁶ See Ibn al-Hājj, vol. IV, p. 12ff; Ibn al-Ikhwa, p. 145ff.

¹⁵⁷ Qāsim, p. 127.

life between the Baḥrī and the Burjī Mamlūk eras; at the same time, however, they also agree about the difference between the two eras with regard to their levels of prosperity and decline. They consider the second, Burjī Mamlūk, era as a natural extension of the first, Baḥrī Mamlūk era, except that the first was the age of power and advancement, while the second was that of weakness and decline.¹⁵⁸

In this regard, the age of the Mamlūks as a whole often faced famines and catastrophic epidemics, however their effect during the second era was more severe than during the first, because the ability to bear them in the first, powerful era was greater than it was during the second, weak one.

No researcher can speak about the major epidemics without mentioning that particular one which shook humanity in a way rarely ever seen, this being the Black Death, as it came to be known. This epidemic invaded the Mamlūk state in the middle of the 8th/14th century, or more precisely, in the autumn of 748/1347—i.e., thirty five years before the fall of the Baḥrī Mamlūk state. Of course, it not only devastated the Mamlūk lands, but also many other parts of the world. Furthermore, it proved to be the first of a series of epidemics, as Eliyahu Ashtor states:¹⁵⁹

As in Europe, so in the Near East the Black Death was the beginning of a long period of demographic decline. The losses it had suffered by the terrible plague were not repaired by intensive procreation. Levasseur's law

¹⁵⁸ See Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 882; 'Āshūr, *al- 'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 159; Qāsim, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Ashtor, p. 302.

did not operate. On the contrary, there followed a series of epidemics.

Al-Maqrīzī states in his book *al-Sulūk* that work in the orchards of Damietta ceased and the trees dried up, due to the death of the owners and their animals. The shops of the city were left open, with nobody approaching them. Fishermen died, their nets still in their hands, filled with dead fish. As for Cairo, nobody there could make use of any potions, medicines, or doctors, due to the speed at which death came; every day between ten and twenty thousand people died as a result of this epidemic.¹⁶⁰

This immense epidemic, and those epidemics which followed, were accompanied in the Mamlūk state by deadly famines. For the most part, there would be a degree of correlation between the two; sometimes an epidemic would cause a famine, and sometimes a famine would cause an epidemic.

On the other hand, the causes of famine were many and varied. Some were natural; for example, lack of rain in regions dependent upon it, such as Greater Syria, the Ḥijāz, and parts of Iraq. As for Egypt, the main natural cause was low levels of water in the river Nile, and hence a decrease in the levels of flooding. This would in turn lead to the failure of agriculture, which was dependent upon these floods, and therefore to a poor harvest.¹⁶¹

There were other lesser reasons for famines, such as damage done to crops

¹⁶⁰ Al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, vol. IV, pp. 85, 87.

¹⁶¹ Allouche, Adel. *Mamluk Economics, a Study and Translation of al-Maqrīzī's Ighāthah*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994. p. 50; Borsch, S.J., "Nile Floods and the Irrigation System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt" in *Mamlūk Studies Review*, vol. IV 2000, pp. 131ff.

by locusts, fires, and the like. Some were also the result of the unrest and political discord that took place during the Mamlūk era, mainly as a result of the rivalry between the leading emirs over the position of Sultan, or the anger of certain Mamlūks over the distribution of feudal estates, and the like.¹⁶²

Whatever the reasons, these famines deeply affected life during the Burjī Mamlūk era. They resulted in high increases in the prices of food, beverages, and clothing, and would be followed by an imbalance in the wages resulting from different crafts and industries.¹⁶³ In addition, huge declines in the populations of towns and villages were seen, leading to entire villages being left desolate, following the death of great numbers of peasants, and to the ruination of many markets that were dependent upon highly concentrated areas of population.¹⁶⁴

2.1.3 Scholastic and Cultural Life

There is no doubt that the Mamlūk era inherited a vast legacy from the preceding eras in all kinds of sciences and arts. A considerable amount of scholarly material was available for all those wanting to expand upon or analyze former writings, or gather together, summarize, or refine the great works of those that went before. All of this happened during both the Baḥrī and Burjī Mamlūk eras. This comes as no surprise, bearing in mind that the lands occupied by the Mamlūks were Egypt and

¹⁶² ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 334.

¹⁶³ Allouche, p. 51.

¹⁶⁴ Qāsim, p. 169.

Greater Syria—in addition to certain other subsidiary regions, such as the edges of Iraq, and the Ḥijāz—and considering the scholarly influence which one might expected of the people of these regions. These lands were considered the heart of the Arab, Islamic civilization, and a main theatre for scholarly and cultural achievements. Egypt had its ancient cultural heritage, outstanding geographic location—linking two continents, and overlooking the Mediterranean Sea—and more importantly, its great river, which drew people to that region; all of these and other factors made Egypt a leading center for scholarship. Thus, as is mentioned by ‘Āshūr, the North-African traveler al-Balawī expressed his amazement at the intellectual diversity which he saw in Egypt, describing it as ‘the source of knowledge’.¹⁶⁵ The same admiration was shown by the famous historian Ibn Khaldūn in his *al-Muqaddima*, where he writes:¹⁶⁶

We, at this time, notice that science and scientific instruction exist in Cairo in Egypt, because the civilization of (Egypt) is greatly developed and its sedentary culture has been well established for thousands of years. Therefore, the crafts are firmly established there and exist in many varieties. One of them is scientific instruction...Students and teachers increased in numbers, because a large number of stipends became available from the endowments. People traveled to Egypt from the ‘Irāq and the Maghrib in quest of knowledge. Thus, the sciences were very much in

¹⁶⁵ ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Asr al-Mamālīkī*, p. 338.

¹⁶⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, vol. II, p. 435.

demand and greatly cultivated there.

As for Greater Syria, it was no less important than Egypt in this regard. It contained the capital of the Umayyad State, and its historical and cultural heritage, landmarks of which are apparent all throughout the region, made it a cradle of scholarship and culture.¹⁶⁷

Another factor was the tribulation suffered by Baghdad following its invasion by the Tatars. Thereby, scholarship and knowledge were transferred from Baghdad to Egypt and Syria, after a long period, during which Baghdad had been the primary center of knowledge and civilization. The relocation of the Caliphate to Egypt also had a considerable affect in this regard. Al-Suyūṭī alludes to this in his Book *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, where he states that, following the transfer of the Caliphate to Egypt, it became the abode of scholars.¹⁶⁸ It may be that, through their safeguarding the figurehead of the caliphate (i.e. the Abbasid Caliph himself—even though he was divest of all administrative powers, becoming merely a symbol without influence), the Mamlūks intended to gain sufficient credibility and influence to enable them to dominate the region.¹⁶⁹

One point that should be mentioned is the special attention that the Mamlūk Sultans themselves gave to the propagation of knowledge, and their encouragement of learning. If it was not for this encouragement, scholarly activity

¹⁶⁷ See 'Āshūr, *Miṣr wa l-Shām*, pp. 338,339.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol.II, p.75.

¹⁶⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. V, p. 427; Schacht, J., *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 172.

would not have witnessed the prosperity that it did during their era. Indeed, al-Zāhir Baybars paid great attention to, and honored, scholars of many different disciplines. He showed a particular inclination towards historians and the study of history, Abū al-Maḥāsin in *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira* quoting him as having said:¹⁷⁰ “The hearing of history is better than the experiencing of it.” During his era, the University of al-Azhar regained its former position as a destination for students of knowledge, having previously lain inactive and neglected for a century.¹⁷¹ This happened during the Baḥrī Mamlūk era, considered a preliminary period to that of the Burjī Mamlūks in this regard. During the latter era considerable attention was paid to scholarship and literature by the Sultans, starting with Barqūq, the founder of the Burjī Mamlūk state, and followed by the subsequent Mamlūk rulers. Indeed, Sultan al-Ghūrī used to hold study circles (*ḥalaqāt*) in the Citadel once or twice a week.¹⁷² During these circles, various scholarly and religious issues were discussed by the leading scholars of the day and those in attendance.

Notwithstanding the exceptions that we mentioned during our discussion of the social life of the Mamlūks,¹⁷³ scholars, men of literature, and writers enjoyed special privileges throughout the Mamlūk era. Examples demonstrating the respect and esteem shown to them are many and various, with history books and biographical works abounding in such examples.¹⁷⁴ As a result the Mamlūk era

¹⁷⁰ Ibn Taghrī Bardī *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. VII, p. 182.

¹⁷¹ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I’tibār*, vol. III, p. 160.

¹⁷² ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Asr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 339.

¹⁷³ See p. 46 above.

¹⁷⁴ See al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, vol. IV, p. 379; Ibn Taghrī Bardī *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. VIII, p. 108.

generated a large number of scholars across a wide range of disciplines. Likewise it saw an increase in the phenomenon of individual scholars authoring hundreds of compilations. A prime example of this is Muḥammad ibn Jamā'a, whose works, according to al-Suyūṭī, exceeded a thousand.¹⁷⁵ Al-Suyūṭī is himself regarded as also having been an extremely prolific writer.

2.1.3.1 Madrasas

Madrasas did not first appear in the Mamlūk era, but were already widespread in those countries that fell under their dominion. They played a great role in the spread of knowledge and scholarship, particularly during the two parts of the Seljuk era: the Zankid and the Ayyūbid.¹⁷⁶ The Seljuks succeeded certain states adhering to the Shiite doctrine, such as the Buwayhid and the Fatimid; thus they exerted their best efforts in propagating the Sunni doctrine instead, building *madrasas* and other teaching facilities for this purpose. The al-Madrasa al-Nizāmiyya—built in Baghdad in 459/1067, and named after the vizier Niẓām al-Mulk—is an obvious example of this, and is considered one of the most famous and ancient of *madrasas*.¹⁷⁷ Historians also state that Nūr al-Dīn Zanki was one figure who exerted considerable effort to the building of *madrasas*.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 62.

¹⁷⁶ Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 148.

¹⁷⁷ Al-Suyūṭī *Husn al-Muḥādara*, vol. II, p. 197.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Nu'aymī, 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad. *al-Dāris fī Tārīkh al-Madāris*. 1st ed. by Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1990. vol. I, p. 467.

As for Egypt, according to al-Qalqashandī in his book *Ṣubḥ al-a‘shā fi sinā‘at al-inshā*, the first to build *madrasas* there were the Ayyubids. Al-Qalqashandī states that the first *madrasa* was the al-Madrasa al-Mālikiyya, known as al-Qamḥiyya, built by Saladin.¹⁷⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, on the other hand, in *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I‘tibār* asserts that the first *madrasa* in Egypt was al-Madrasa al-Nāṣiriyya, followed by the al-Qamḥiyya.¹⁸⁰

When the Mamlūks came, at the end of the Ayyubid era, they paid great attention to *madrasas* and other educational facilities. Sultans would compete in building them throughout Egypt, Syria, and the Hijāz, both in cities, as well as in villages and the countryside. This was not limited to the Sultans alone, however, emirs also competing in this regard.¹⁸¹ Even certain leading women, the wives of sultans or powerful emirs, played a large role in establishing *madrasas* and other educational facilities. For example, al-Maqrīzī tells of Khuwand Tatar who built the al-Madrasa al-Hijāziyya, and then appointed the personnel in charge of it, and the curriculum taught therein. She established lessons for students of the Shāfi‘ī school of law, appointing as their teacher the Shaikh Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī, considered one of the greatest scholars of his time. She also initiated similar lessons for the Mālikī school of law, and in addition built a valuable library in the *madrasa*. She even arranged for a group of reciters to alternate in reciting the Qur’ān all day and all night. Next to the *madrasa* she built a shelter for orphans,

¹⁷⁹ Al-Qalqashandī, vol. XI, p. 234.

¹⁸⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I‘tibār*, vol. III, p. 315.

¹⁸¹ ‘Āshūr, *Miṣr wa l-Shām*, p. 293.

where they had their own private educator, in addition to receiving food and clothing.¹⁸²

It does not need to be said that, even though teaching primarily covered the religious sciences with their various branches and schools of thought, these *madrasas* taught all existing branches of knowledge, not specializing in one discipline as opposed to another. However, Greater Syria distinguished itself from Egypt in this regard by the appearance of *madrasas* specifically for grammar, where it was studied with great care, with interest being shown to research and questions concerning it. Credit for this goes to al-Malik al-Mu‘azzam ‘Īsa, who was himself very knowledgeable, particularly of the Arabic language, to which he was devoted. He occupied himself thoroughly with the work of Sibawayh, which was only studied by those who excelled in this discipline. He founded two *madrasas* specializing in the study of Arabic grammar, one in Jerusalem, and the other, al-Madrasa al-‘Ādiliyya, in Damascus.¹⁸³

It was the custom during the Mamlūk era that when a *madrasa* was built it was inaugurated in a great ceremony attended by the Sultan, emirs, jurists, judges, and leading personalities. A luxurious table would be laid in the courtyard of the *madrasa*, bearing all kinds of foods, sweets, and fruits. The Sultan would present gifts to all those who took part in its construction, both builders and engineers. Then he would appoint the personnel of the *madrasa*: the teachers, jurists,

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 347.

¹⁸³ Makram, ‘Abd al-‘āl Sālīm. *al-Madrasa al-Naḥwiyya fī Miṣr wa l-Shām*. 2nd ed. Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1990. p. 120.

servants, reciters, and others.¹⁸⁴ It is worth mentioning that the position of teacher in these *madrasas* was a very high rank. If the Sultan was the founder of the *madrasa*, he would himself look after its affairs, offering gifts to the head teacher, and presenting him with an official statement. This would vary according to the subject taught, and would offer advice and direction to the teacher, and urge him to give his full attention to his students and to exert his best efforts vis-à-vis the search for knowledge. In addition, there is also evidence that the Sultan, or emir, would instruct the teacher to show consideration for the psychological and educational needs of the students, as well as to their personal differences. This can be seen, for example, in al-Qalqashandī's account of the advice given to teachers, which states:¹⁸⁵

The teacher should greet his students with a cheerful face, should try to gain their affection as much as he can, should teach them as a father teaches his son, should encourage them regarding the ideas that they offer during his lessons, should give precedence to he who deserves it, and put each of them in their proper place, so as to motivate them to work and to gain more knowledge.

It was common practice in these *madrasas* to appoint one or more teaching assistants (*mu'īds*) for each teacher, who would repeat to the students what the

¹⁸⁴ Al-Nu'aymī, vol. II, p. 279; 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamālīkī*, p. 340.

¹⁸⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, vol. XI, p. 97.

teacher had imparted, and hence increase their understanding. Similarly, he would clarify anything requiring explanation. As far as the students were concerned, they were free to choose which subjects they studied. Their choice often depended upon the status and scholarly reputation of the teacher; a student might travel from a remote land in order to study with a famous scholar. When a student had finished his studies and had himself become qualified to teach, his teacher would issue him with a certificate stating the name of the student, his teacher, his school of law, the date the certificate was given, and more. Undoubtedly, the value of a certificate depended upon the reputation of the teacher issuing it and his scholarly rank.¹⁸⁶

2.1.3.2 Libraries

The Mamlūk era witnessed considerable activity with regard to the amassing of books and the construction and administering of libraries, this being a consequence of the intellectual life of the era. This was actively encouraged by the Mamlūk Sultans themselves, who would compete in collecting books and founding libraries. Their palaces and those of the emirs were replete with libraries. In the Citadel—considered their primary center—they maintained a large library containing a great variety of books covering many fields.¹⁸⁷

There were also libraries connected to *madrasas*. These were excellently

¹⁸⁶ See 'Āshūr, *al-Mujtama' al-Mṣrī*, p. 145.

¹⁸⁷ Al-Nuwayrī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. *Nihāyat al-Arab fī funūn al-Adab*. Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya. vol. XXVIII, p. 365; 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamālīkī*, p. 342.

organized and extremely well equipped, as is shown from al-Nuwayrī's account of the al-Madrasa al-Manṣūriyya and the many types of books it contained, covering Qur'ān exegesis, Arabic language, literature, medicine, and so forth.¹⁸⁸

The same was done by al-Zāhir Baybars in the library of the al-Madrasa al-Zāhiriyya in Damascus. Historical sources show that he attached to the *madrasa* a superb library containing a vast number of works, covering various disciplines.¹⁸⁹ This still exists to this day, and is considered one of the primary cultural landmarks of Syria. The library of the al-Madrasa al-Fāḍiliyya in Cairo contained 100,000 volumes, as is affirmed by al-Maqrīzī.¹⁹⁰ He similarly states that the al-Madrasa al-Mahmūdiyya, established in 797/1394, contained a library whose like was not known at that time in Egypt or Greater Syria, containing books and reference works on every discipline.¹⁹¹

As the Mamlūk era progressed, and despite the measure of unrest and the many revolutions, the Circassian Sultans and emirs did not fall short of their predecessors in this regard. Sultan Barqūq and his successors supplied the *madrasas* that they founded with splendidly furnished libraries, adorned with wide varieties of books.¹⁹²

There were also libraries attached to mosques, spiritual retreats, and prayer rooms. So, for example, al-Maqrīzī relates how Sultan Barqūq came to the library

¹⁸⁸ Al-Nuwayrī, vol. XXXI, pp. 111, 112.

¹⁸⁹ 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 342.

¹⁹⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, p. 319.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 368.

¹⁹² See 'Āshūr, *al-'Aṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 342; 'Āshūr, *al-Mujtama' al-Mṣrī*, p. 162.

of the al-Mu'ayyidī Mosque at the time of its completion, and how a large number of books were brought to the library, with the Kātib al-Sirr (Private Secretary), Nāṣir al-Dīn, presenting a gift of 500 volumes to the library in the presence of the Sultan.¹⁹³

In addition, there were the private libraries in the houses of scholars, men of literature, and intellectuals. These individuals used to compete with one another in collecting rare books. Ibn Taghrī Bardī states that the author Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Kinānī left after his death eighteen book cases containing books on the different arts and sciences.¹⁹⁴

These libraries were supervised by officials known by the title Khāzin al-Kutub (Bookkeeper). It was their duty to arrange, organize, protect, and from time to time restore the books, and in addition to direct readers to the works they required. Thus a bookkeeper was chosen on the basis of his knowledge and trustworthiness. Furthermore, he was not allowed to resign from his work except after receiving a legal declaration from a judge; this indicates the importance and seriousness of his task.¹⁹⁵

The duty of equipping these libraries with books and reference works was unending. In addition to the books donated by the library's founder, the process of supplying the library would be continued thereafter through gifts and donations, or through copying or purchasing. Another important method of furnishing libraries

¹⁹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, p. 253.

¹⁹⁴ Ibn Taghrī Bardī *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. IX, p. 285.

¹⁹⁵ Baybars al-Dawādār. *Zubdat al-Fikra fī Tārīkh al-Hijra*, vol. IX. Edited by Zubayda Muḥammad 'Aṭā. 'Ayn li l-Dirāsāt wa l-Buḥūth al-Insāniyya wa l-Ijtimā'iyya, n.d. introduction, p. 19.

was via religious endowments, with many scholars donating their private collections of books after their deaths.¹⁹⁶

2.1.3.3 Maktab

These were schools attached to mosques and *madrasas*, dedicated to teaching orphans. They were given the name *maktab al-sabīl* (literally ‘charitable school’). While the *madrasas* during the Mamlūk era constituted the higher educational institutes, the *maktab*s represented the primary stage of education. Since the main purpose of their establishment was the teaching of orphans, the wealthy and charitable, the emirs, and even the Sultans competed in establishing and looking after such *maktab*s, and offered religious endowments to help fund them.¹⁹⁷

Education of the children in the *maktab* was carried out by a teacher known as a *mu’addib* (instructor), although sometimes called a *faqīh* (jurist). It was stipulated that he be charitable, trustworthy, and possess high morals as well as the appropriate skills required to be a teacher. He was aided by a teaching assistant, known as an ‘*arīf*—just as the teacher in the *madrasa* was aided by a *mu’īd*, as mentioned above¹⁹⁸—amongst whose tasks was helping the slower children; these would show their slates to him in the absence of the teacher. One *maktab* might require more than one teacher and assistant, depending upon the number of

¹⁹⁶ ‘Āshūr, *al-‘Aṣr al-Mamālīkī*, p. 343; ‘Āshūr, *al-Mujtama‘ al-Mṣrī*, pp. 161, 162.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Āshūr, *Miṣr wa l-Shām*, p. 299.

¹⁹⁸ See p. 71 above.

children. Al-Nuwayrī states that the *maktab* attached to the al-Madrasa al-Manṣūriyya had sixty young orphans, for whom were appointed two teachers.¹⁹⁹ In other *maktabs*, however, the number of children would be much greater. Hence, al-Maqrīzī states that, when the minaret of the al-Malik al-Nāṣir Mosque fell down, about 300 orphans from the mosque's *maktab* were killed.²⁰⁰

Orphans in these *maktabs* were paid a monthly allowance, in addition to receiving a daily ration, usually consisting of bread, and two items of clothing, one in summer and one in winter.²⁰¹

Curriculums in these *maktabs* centered around reading, writing, and the teaching of the Qur'ān, the Ḥadīth literature, morals, as well as basic arithmetic, grammar, and poetry. Children began by writing on slates, until they could write properly, at which time they moved on to paper. When the child reached maturity, and was thus no longer considered an orphan, he would pass out of the *maktab* to be replaced by another.²⁰²

If a child completed memorization of the Qur'ān in the *maktab*, a great celebration would be offered for him. The ground, walls, and roof of the *maktab* would be decorated with silk. The child's family would adorn him with golden necklaces, perfume him with ambergris, and sit him on the back of a highly decorated horse or mule. They would carry before him trays filled with garments and turbans of silk. At the same time the children of the *maktab* would walk in

¹⁹⁹ Al-Nuwayrī, vol.XXXI, p. 113.

²⁰⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, p. 232.

²⁰¹ Baybars al-Dawādār, *Zubdat al-fikra*, introduction, p. 20.

²⁰² See Ibn al-Ikhwa, p. 181; 'Āshūr, *al- 'Aṣr al-Mamālīkī*, p. 344.

front of him, singing songs all the way, until they had brought him to his house. At the house the teacher would enter and hand the child's slate to his mother, who would give the teacher whatever sum of money she could afford.²⁰³

2.1.4 Scholarly and Encyclopedic Works

The Mamlūk era was witness to a prolific writing movement. Encyclopedic works became famous; or more accurately, there appeared on the scholastic and cultural scene a group of scholars characterized by their production of encyclopedic compilations. That is to say, an author would compile a number of books considered as vast encyclopedias of learning, whether each of these dealt with a single subject or many.

This type of compilation became widely apparent during the first, Bahrī Mamlūk era—as was briefly mentioned during our discussion of Ibn Hishām in chapter 1.²⁰⁴ An example of one of these encyclopedic authors was Ibn Manẓūr al-Anṣārī, author of *Lisān al-ʿArab*, regarded as one of the largest, if not the largest, encyclopedias and dictionaries dealing with language.

However, this phenomenon became even more apparent during the Burjī Mamlūk era. This era witnessed outstanding individuals in a number of cultural and scholastic fields, whose works remain sources of reference for scholarly research up till now.

²⁰³ See Ibn al-Hājj, vol. II, p. 331; ʿĀshūr, *al-ʿAṣr al-Mamlūkī*, p. 344.

²⁰⁴ See: p. 5 above.

One of these scholars was Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī (766/1364-845/1442),²⁰⁵ author of a number of historical writings which no one studying the history of Egypt can ignore. He is rightly regarded as the foremost historian of Egypt, not because he was the first, but because of his creativity in this field, and his detailed study of many cultural aspects not found in the works of others. If we take his magnificent book *al-Mawā'iz wa l-i'tibār*, commonly known as *al-Khiṭaṭ*, we find that it is unique in its field, having become a guide for all researchers and a reference for all those wishing to know about the different aspects of Egyptian life. It is exceptional in its presentation and arrangement. Furthermore, its rich material regarding Cairo and its topography is worthy of admiration. The book describes streets, the land, markets, mosques, districts, palaces, schools, gardens, and the walls of Cairo in meticulous detail, offering to the reader a vivid picture of this ancient city from the time of its foundation up till that of al-Maqrīzī. This book took al-Maqrīzī more than thirty five years to complete.²⁰⁶

Another of al-Maqrīzī's works is *al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, a large history book divided according to years, after the style of most historical works. This book is especially interested in the history of Egypt, starting from 568/1172 until 844/1441, i.e. one year before the author's death. Al-Maqrīzī did not limit himself to only these two works; rather, on history alone, he compiled more than thirty books, some large and others small in size, not to mention the

²⁰⁵ See al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. I, p. 79; al-Ziriklī, *Khiyr al-Dīn. al-A'lām*. 6th ed. Beirut: Dār al-ʿilm li l-Malayīn, 1984. vol. I, p. 177; Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 844.

²⁰⁶ Al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, introduction, vol. I, p.9.

books that he authored on other subjects. In fact, al-Sakhāwī states that al-Maqrīzī's writings numbered as many as 200 volumes.²⁰⁷

Another leading author of the age was Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (773/1372-852/1449),²⁰⁸ viewed as the most famous scholar of Ḥadīth from his time to the present. His is the great reference work on Ḥadīth *Fath al-Bārī*, elucidating the work of al-Bukhārī. He left a scholarly legacy so vast that there has hardly ever been a writer as prolific. His works numbered more than 270, many of them being huge reference works. Amongst these is *al-Iṣāba*, dealing with the biographies of the Companions, of which he writes more than 12,000, this being the largest work in its field. Another of his compilations is *al-Durar al-Kāmina fī A'yān al-Mī'a al-Thāmina*. This is, similarly, the largest biographical work dealing with individuals of the eighth Islamic century, comprising 5320 entries. He also authored a book detailing the events of his era and the biographies of his contemporaries called *Inba' al-Ghumr bi-Abnā' al-'Umr*. Moreover, he was a poet, and he composed three collections of poems.

In this context we can also highlight Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (849-911/1445-1505), rightly considered one of the most productive scholastic authors. Al-Suyūṭī wrote his own autobiography in his book *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*,²⁰⁹ where he states that he authored in the region of 300 books in various disciplines. He gives no

²⁰⁷ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 24.

²⁰⁸ See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. I, pp. 36ff.; al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Ṭabaqāt al-Huffāz*. 2nd ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1994. p. 552; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. I, p. 87; al-Ziriklī, vol. I, p. 178.

²⁰⁹ Al-Suyūṭī *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, pp. 258ff. Regarding al-Suyūṭī, see also al-Ziriklī, vol. III, p. 301; Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 898.

indication in this book as to the time of its composition; however, he subsequently wrote a vast number of works, approximately equal to the number mentioned in *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*. His student al-Dāwūdī relates that al-Suyūṭī's books exceeded 500;²¹⁰ while al-Ziriklī in *al-A 'lām* declares them to have numbered about 600.

Despite the fact that al-Suyūṭī's works tend to be compilations of the writings of previous authors, they are characterized by their accuracy and comprehensiveness. The size of his books vary, some reaching many volumes, such as *al-Durr al-manthūr fi-l-tafsīr bi-l-ma'thūr*; *Ham' al-Hawāmi'*, which deals with grammar and is considered one of the most comprehensive works on the differing opinions of the grammarians; and *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, which details the biographies of linguists and grammarians, and which is considered the most exhaustive reference work in its field, containing more than 1200 biographies. On the other hand, we find some of al-Suyūṭī's books to be little pamphlets or even just comprising a small number of pages. Many of these short writings—sometimes called treatises (*rasā'il*)—were printed in two volumes under the title *al-Ḥawī fi-l-fatāwī*; this work comprising seventy eight writings on almost all subjects prevailing in his time.

²¹⁰ Al-Suyūṭī *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*, (the Introduction) vol. I, p. 8.

2.2 Section 2: Al-Shumunnī: His Social and Scholarly Life

Al-Shumunnī was perhaps fortunate that three of the greatest historians ever were his contemporaries. Still further, they had been amongst his intimate students, and were proud of having been taught by him. The first of these historians was Abū al-Maḥāsin ibn Taghrī Bardī (813-874/1411-1470), considered one the most famous historian of the 9th Islamic century.²¹¹ He authored important historical and biographical works, the most famous of which were *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira* and *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*. The second historian was Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (831-902/1426-1497), the encyclopedic author who wrote a number of famous books in a variety of different disciplines. The most significant of his works as far as this study is concerned is *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, considered the most important work on the biographies of individuals from the AH 9th century. The third historian was Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, whom we have already discussed in our treatment of scholastic life above.²¹²

Each one of these historians dedicated to al-Shumunnī a biography worthy of this great individual. Ibn Taghrī Bardī wrote two biographies of al-Shumunnī, one in his book *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, and the other in *Ḥawādith al-Duhūr*. Al-Sakhāwī authored an extensive biography, the largest written on the life of al-Shumunnī, in his book *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*. In addition, this work is the most informative about all aspects of al-Shumunnī's scholarly and social life. This is not

²¹¹ Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 864.

²¹² See: p. 79 above.

just because of what is contained within the actual biography of al-Shumunnī, but also due to the information scattered throughout different parts of the book, under the biographies of other individuals; information on a large number of al-Shumunnī's students and teachers. As far as al-Suyūṭī is concerned, like Ibn Taghrī Bardī, he authored two biographies on al-Shumunnī. One of these is found in *Bughyat al-Wu'ā fī Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawiyyīn wa l-Nuḥā*, considered the second largest and most important biography after that of al-Sakhāwī; the second is in his book *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara fī Tārīkh Miṣr wa l-Qāhira*, wherein al-Suyūṭī gives al-Shumunnī's biography amongst those of the leading Ḥanafī jurists ever to have inhabited Egypt. It is noteworthy that al-Suyūṭī gives the biographies of fifty eight Ḥanafī jurists, yet that of al-Shumunnī is the largest of all.

These five biographies of al-Shumunnī are considered the most important. They also constitute the earliest biographies of al-Shumunnī, with all subsequent historians and biographers drawing largely from these. Naturally there were other biographies of al-Shumunnī—indeed there were another eight besides these five—but they rarely departed from that contained in those of his three students, and then only on minor points. The further biographies are found in the following, chronologically arranged books:

- *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Saniyya fī Tarājim al-Ḥanaḥiyya*, by Taqī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Tamīmī al-Ghazzī (1010/1601).²¹³ This biography is copied directly from al-Suyūṭī’s book *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, as is mentioned by the author; it is exactly the same, except for some slight abridgement of the last part of the biography.
- *Shadhārāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār man Dhahab*, by Ibn al-‘Imād al-Ḥanbalī (1032-1089/1623-1679).²¹⁴ The same can be said about this biography as the last; it is taken directly from al-Suyūṭī’s *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, without any addition or alteration except for a few simple words, caused (in my opinion) by differences in manuscripts. Likewise, there is a slight degree of abridgement, without violation to the text, and the final portion of the biography has not been included.
- *Al-Badr al-Ṭālī‘ bi Maḥāsin man ba‘da al-Qarn al-Tāsi‘*, by Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Shawkānī (1173-1250/1760-1834).²¹⁵

This biography depends to a great extent upon al-Sakhāwī’s

²¹³ Al-Ghazzī, Taqī al-Dīn ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir. *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Saniyya fī tarājim al-Ḥanaḥiyya*. 1st ed. by ‘Abd al-Fatāḥ al-Ḥulū. Riyadh: Dār al-Rifā‘ī, 1983.

²¹⁴ Ibn al-‘Imād al-Ḥanbalī. *Shadhārāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār man Dhahab*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, AH 1351.

²¹⁵ Al-Shawkānī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī. *al-Badr al-Ṭālī‘ bi Maḥāsin man ba‘da al-Qarn al-Sābi‘*. 1st ed. by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya. Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifa, 1929.

book, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi‘*, hardly departing from the information stated therein. However, al-Shawkānī interposed some of his own opinions at certain points, putting his own stamp on the biography; furthermore, he did not copy from *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi‘* word for word, but rather by a process of selection and adaptation.

- *Al-Fawā'id al-Bahiyya fī Tarājim al-Ḥanafīyya*, by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥayy al-Laknawī (1264-1304/1848-1887).²¹⁶ Al-Shumunnī's biography in this book has been taken from three sources: *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi‘*, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, and *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*. In addition it makes use of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī's biography of the father of al-Shumunnī.

- *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-‘Ulamā’ wa l-Sādāt*, by Muḥammad ibn Bāqir al-Khuwānsārī (1226/1811-1313/1895).²¹⁷ This biography is copied from al-Suyūṭī's *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, the author mentioning the same information.

²¹⁶ Al-Laknawī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥayy. *al-Fawā'id al-Bahiyya fī Tarājim al-Ḥanafīyya*. Edited by Na‘īm Ashraf Nūr. Karachi: Idārat al-Qur‘ān wa l-‘Ulūm al-Islāmiyya, n.d.

²¹⁷ Al-Khuwānsārī, Muḥammad Bāqir. *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-‘Ulamā’ wa l-Sādāt*. 1st ed. Beirut: al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, 1990.

- *Hadiyyat al-‘Ārifīn*, by Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad al-Babānī (d.1339/1920).²¹⁸ This is a concise biography, filling only a few lines. Al-Baghdādī does not mention his source, and he adds no further information to that given in the early biographies, except that it contains a number of mistakes, which we shall discuss below.
- *Al-A‘lām*, by Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī (1310-1396/1893-1976).²¹⁹ This is a concise, modern biography (as is normal for this work), containing no further information than that given in the early sources.
- *Tārīkh al-adab al-‘Arabī*, by ‘Umar Farrūkh.²²⁰ This is a biography of medium length, covering one full page, of twenty five lines. No additional information is given to that mentioned in the previous biographical works.

Further to what has been said, we can add the brief descriptions of al-Shumunnī which appear in certain reference works, such as *Kashf al-Ẓunūn* by Ḥājī Khalīfa, where an account of his is given when reference is made to some of

²¹⁸ Al-Babānī, Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad. *Hadiyyat al-‘Ārifīn fī Asmā’ al-Mu‘allifīn wa Āthār al-Muṣannifīn*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1992.

²¹⁹ Al-Ziriklī, Khayr al-Dīn. *al-A‘lām*. 6th ed. Beirut: Dār al-‘ilm li l-Malayīn, 1984.

²²⁰ Farrūkh, ‘Umar. *Tārīkh al-Adab al-‘Arabī*. 4th ed. Beirut: Dār al-‘ilm li l-Malayīn, 1984.

his books. However, these cannot be considered as biographies, as they generally only mention his name and the year of his death. Mention is also made of al-Shumunnī and his father in the *Tāj al-‘Arūs* of al-Zabīdī, where they appear under the subject entry ‘*shamana*’.

From the above, we can ascertain that the information reported in the biographies of the three students of al-Shumunnī constitute the main and most important source of information for all aspects of his life. This does not mean that we should limit ourselves to just these works when trying to give a complete picture of al-Shumunnī. Indeed, there are other pieces of information, scattered throughout historical and biographical works, which might be of great benefit in throwing light upon certain aspects of his life, regarding which the main biographies are of little help.

2.2.1 His Name and Lineage

All the biographers of al-Shumunnī agree that his name and genealogy are as follows: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Yahyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalaf Alla ibn Khalīfa. Thus his genealogy was given by Ibn Taghrī Bardī,²²¹ by al-Sakhāwī after him,²²² and then by al-Suyūṭī.²²³ This does not mean that they copied from each other; on the contrary, even a cursory review of

²²¹ Ibn Taghrī Bardī Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Maḥāsīn Yūsuf. *al-Manḥal al-Sāfi wa l-Mustawfi ba‘da al-Wāfi*. Edited by Muḥammad Amīn. Cairo: al-Hay‘a al-Miṣriyya al-‘Āmma li l-Kitāb, 1984. vol. II, p. 100.

²²² Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi‘*, vol. II, p. 174.

²²³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. I, p. 375.

their work shows that none of them was influenced by the others as they do contain different material and report differences in matters of fact.

It should also be mentioned here that al-Sakhāwī added a further name (Muḥammad) to the end of the list of names, i.e. the father of Khalīfa. This addition does not appear under al-Sakhāwī's biography of al-Shumunnī, but rather under his biography of al-Shumunnī's father in *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*.²²⁴ Al-Suyūṭī did the same when writing a biography for one of al-Shumunni's forefathers (Muḥammad ibn Khalīfa) in his work *Bughyat al-Wu'ā'*.²²⁵ Thus the number of his forefathers reaches nine by this addition.

Furthermore, al-Suyūṭī in his book *Husn al-Muḥāḍara* limited himself to the last four names of al-Shumunnī's genealogy, i.e. up to Ḥasan, the great-grandfather of al-Shumunnī.²²⁶ The reason for this may be that this book of al-Suyūṭī's is not exclusively biographical, as is his other work, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā'*.

If we return to the secondary sources for al-Shumunnī's biography—i.e., those other than the books of his three students—they all agree with the aforementioned genealogy. The only slight exception to this is reported by Ibn al-ʿImād in *Shadhārāt al-Dhahab*, who omits one of his forefathers (Ḥasan, al-Shumunnī's great-grandfather).²²⁷ This can perhaps be attributed to a mistake by a copyist or to a difference in manuscripts.

²²⁴ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. IX, p. 74.

²²⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā'*, vol. I, p. 375.

²²⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, p. 366.

²²⁷ Ibn al-ʿImād al-Ḥanbalī. *Shadhārāt al-Dhahab fī Akhbār man Dhahab*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, AH 1351. vol. VII, p. 313.

As for his *laqab*, all sources are in accord that it is Taqī al-Dīn. As they are in agreement that his *kunya* is Abū al-‘Abbās, with the exception of Ibn Taghrī Bardī, who does not mention a *kunya*.

Also in this regard, we find that Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī in his book *Inbā’ al-Ghumr*, when giving a biography of al-Shumunnī’s father, states his genealogy as follows: Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khalaf Alla.²²⁸ This is very strange, and is completely different from what is given in all of al-Shumunnī’s biographies. Although Ibn Ḥajar was a contemporary of al-Shumunnī’s father, he is not accurate in this matter, in spite of his being famous for his accuracy. In his biography of al-Shumunnī’s father Al-Sakhāwī mentions this mistake of his teacher Ibn Ḥajar and corrects it²²⁹.

Moving on to the origin of the name ‘al-Shummunī’, we find that al-Shumunnī and his parents bore the family name (*nisba*): al-Shumunnī, al-Qusanṭīnī and al-Dārī. We will look at each of these, so as to clarify some peculiarities about the history of this scholar and his family.

Regarding the name ‘al-Shumunnī’, this is the usual affiliation given to this scholar in the biographical dictionaries, or in any other works; so much so that when the name ‘al-Shumunnī’ is mentioned, it is universally understood to refer to scholar (or on very rare occasions to one of his forebears). In this regard we can even say that this family name is exclusive to him and his family; and we have not

²²⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-‘Asqalānī. *Inbā’ al-Ghumr bi Abnā’ al-‘Umr*. 2nd ed. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya. 1986. vol. VII, p. 339.

²²⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. IX, p. 74.

found in any of the available resources anyone who shares this name with the author and his family. Moreover, in the context of the available resources, all those who wrote biographies of al-Shumunnī identify him by this family name. Furthermore, his opinions, which can be found scattered throughout numerous books and resources, and all allusions made to him in the biographies of his students and teachers in all of the biographical works, are with this designation: al-Shumunnī.

We find that al-Sakhāwī was the first to discuss the origin and meaning of this word in his book *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*. After providing the correct pronunciation of the word, he states that it is the name of a farm, or a village (or both) in one of the lands of the Maghreb (North Africa)—however, al-Sakhāwī does not mention which.²³⁰ Despite the fact that al-Sakhāwī's teacher, Ibn Ḥajar, preceded him in speaking about the term 'al-Shumunnī' in his book *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih bi Taḥrīr al-Mushtabih*, he merely offered its correct pronunciation without discussing its origin.²³¹ Subsequently, al-Suyūṭī in his book *Lubb al-Lubāb fī Taḥrīr al-Ansāb*, confirmed what al-Sakhāwī stated, although with greater precision he states that the name was derived from 'Shumunna', a village near Qusanṭīna.²³² Then al-Zabīdī, in his book *Tāj al-'Arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*, mentioned that "Shumunna" was either a farm near Qusanṭīna in the Maghreb, or the name of an

²³⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 174.

²³¹ Ibn Ḥajar, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-'Asqalānī. *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih bi Taḥrīr al-Mushtabih*. Edited by 'Alī al-Bijāwī. Beirut: al-Maktaba al-'Ilmiyya, 1964. vol. II, p. 748.

²³² Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān. *Lubb al-Lubāb fī Taḥrīr al-Ansāb*. 1st ed. by Muḥammad Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz & Ashraf Aḥmad 'Abd al-'Azīz. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya. 1991. vol. II, p. 60.

Arab tribe residing in that location.²³³ In the modern era, al-Kattānī (1274/1875-1354/1927), who was from Fez in Morocco, mentioned in his book *al-Risāla al-Mustaṭrafa* that al-Shumunnī was named after a farm near Qusanṭīna called Shumunna;²³⁴ however, we do not know if al-Kattānī was merely copying al-Suyūṭī in this regard or not.

Discussion of the name al-Shumunnī has led us to the second family name, that of al-Qusanṭīnī, mentioned by all who provided a biography of our scholar. The origin of this family name is clearer as it refers to the city of Qusanṭīna in North Africa, located to the east of Algiers.

As for the third appellation, al-Tamīmī, at first sight it would seem to refer to the famous Arab tribe ‘Banū Tamīm’, since most of those named Tamīmī are affiliated to this great tribe. However, there is another possibility, which may be closer to the truth. This is that it is derived from Tamīm al-Dārī, i.e. Tamīm ibn Aws, from the tribe of Lakhm. He resided with part of his tribe in al-Shām (Greater Syria) before Islam. One of his forefathers was named ‘al-Dār’, and hence he became famous as ‘al-Dārī’.²³⁵ Thus there are two possibilities for the origin of this appellation, and perhaps it is the fourth family name mentioned in regard to al-Shumunnī which will clarify the matter. This fourth family name is

²³³ Al-Zabīdī, al-Sayyid Murtaḍa. *Tāj al-‘Arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*. Edited by a group of editors. Cairo: Dār al-Hidāya, n.d. vol. XXXV, p. 289.

²³⁴ Al-Kattānī, Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far. *al-Risāla al-Mustaṭrafa*. 4th ed. by Muḥammad al-Zamzamī. Beirut: Dār al-Bashā’ir al-Islāmiyya, 1986. vol. I, p. 216.

²³⁵ Al-Qalqashandī, vol. I, p.388.

‘al-Dārī’, and is given by al-Sakhāwī in *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi*²³⁶ and by al-Suyūṭī in *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*.²³⁷

The name al-Dārī has a number of different possible origins, as is mentioned in those sources dealing with the origins of names.²³⁸ One explanation is that it refers to the famous Tamīm al-Dārī, mentioned above. The second is that it refers to a kind of perfume, which was brought by way of the village of Dārīn, situated in the east of the Arabian Peninsula. A third explanation is that it is derived from a village near the city of Herat in Afghanistan.

These are the different possibilities for this appellation. However, if we return to the family name preceding this one, i.e. al-Tamīmī, and see the correlation between the two, we may favour al-Shumunnī’s family name to the tribe of Tamīm al-Dārī.

The biographical works mention a number of individuals affiliated to this tribe who played a role in Egyptian life or in Greater Syria during the Mamlūk era, whether this be in political life, such as the Vizier Fakhr al-Dīn al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 711/1312),²³⁹ or in scholarly life, such as Shihāb al-Dīn al-Tamīmī al-Dārī (d. 862/1458), who was a scholar and judge in the city of Hebron.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi*, vol. I, p. 174.

²³⁷ Al-Suyūṭī *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, p. 366.

²³⁸ See al-Sam‘ānī, ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Abī Bakr. *al-Ansāb*. 1st ed. by ‘Abdulla ‘Umar al-Bārūdī. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1998. vol. II, p. 442.

²³⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. III. p. 170.

²⁴⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi*, vol. II, p13.

2.2.2 His Native Land

It appears from our previous discussion about the name and family name of al-Shumunnī that there is some relationship between his family name and the land that al-Shumunnī came from, or lived in.

As for al-Shumunnī's birthplace, there is no doubt surrounding this, as all his biographers are in agreement that he was born in Alexandria. However, there still remains some ambiguity about the place from which al-Shumunnī's family originally came, and when.

There is apparent agreement that his family came from the Maghreb. By this we do not mean that there is anyone who opposes this, but merely that there are some sources which have mentioned this fact and other which have not. The location is narrowed down still further, being restricted to Qusanṭīna or its surroundings. The location becomes more definite when it is narrowed down to Shumunna, which is either a farm or a village near Qusanṭīna, or perhaps a tribe. As shown above, al-Zabīdī in his book *Tāj al-'Arūs* stands alone in mentioning that Shumunna was a tribe,²⁴¹ but he came some time after al-Shumunnī and does not cite the source of this information. If we take his suggestion into consideration, then was this tribe descended from Tamīm al-Dārī or not?

One question remains which is difficult to explain: the tribe to which al-Shumunnī was affiliated (the tribe of Tamīm al-Dārī) lived in al-Shām, or more specifically in Palestine. Some of its members moved to Egypt, but there is no

²⁴¹ See: p. 89 above.

indication that they moved to the Maghreb. However, we find something to draw upon in al-Sakhāwī's *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, where he mentions in the biography of 'Umar ibn Muḥammad al-Tamīm al Dārī (d. 846/1443), that the latter was from Tunis.²⁴² We may understand from this that some of the members of this tribe were living in this region.

With regard to the time when al-Shumunnī's ancestors moved from their native land to Egypt, we are unable to determine this exactly. Nevertheless, in his book *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, al-Suyūṭī mentions in his short biography of one of al-Shumunnī's ancestors six generations preceding, namely Muḥammad ibn Khalaf Alla, that he was one of the teachers in the Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ in Cairo, and also that he was born in Qusanṭīna in 593/1196.²⁴³ This is the earliest discernible presence of the family in Egypt. Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī—who was prior to al-Suyūṭī—mentions that Muḥammad ibn Khalaf Alla had been one of the leading teachers in the Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ in Cairo.²⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥajar does not mention the place or date of his birth, although he does further inform us that one of the students of Muḥammad ibn Khalaf Alla was al-Rashīd al-'Aṭṭār. Looking at the biography of this individual, we find that he was born in 584/1190 and died in 622/1263.²⁴⁵ There is no indication as to when al-Rashīd al-'Aṭṭār was taught by this ancestor of al-Shumunnī; all that is available in this regard is Ibn Ḥajar's

²⁴² Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. VI, p117.

²⁴³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 101.

²⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih*, vol. II, p. 748.

²⁴⁵ See al-Kutbī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Shākir. *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*. 1st ed. by 'Ādil 'Abd al-Mawjūd & 'Alī Muḥammad 'Awaḍ Alla. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya, 2000. vol. II, p. 616.

statement that al-Rashīd al-‘Aṭṭar was his pupil, a fact to which al-Suyūṭī also refers. From this we can discern that al-Shumunnī’s forefather might have lived in Cairo during the first half of the AH 7th century.

We have no final proof that al-Shumunnī’s family lived in Egypt from the time when this abovementioned ancestor arrived there. However, there is evidence to indicate that a group of his forefathers lived in Egypt, either in Cairo or Alexandria. Thus his father was born in Alexandria in 766/1364,²⁴⁶ just as his grandfather, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, died there in 771/1369.²⁴⁷

2.2.3 His family

Despite what was said earlier about al-Shumunnī’s good fortune, whereby three leading historians were his contemporaries, and were even his own students, very little attention indeed is paid to the family of al-Shumunnī in their writings. In fact, we can say that all of them, with the exception of al-Sakhāwī, avoid mentioning anything about the affairs of al-Shumunnī’s family, rather being satisfied with narrating his genealogy and then discussing the scholarly side of his life. The same can be said of the secondary sources, which drew upon the primary sources; they mention nothing about his family life, except for a passing mention by al-Shawkānī in *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, itself copied from al-Sakhāwī.

²⁴⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi*, vol. IX, p. 74.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. IX, p. 75.

If we wish to discuss al-Shumunnī's family starting with his forefathers, the first one we can speak about is the one six places back from him in his genealogy, i.e. Muḥammad ibn Khalaf Alla. We mentioned above that Ibn Ḥajar regards him as being one of the leading teachers in the Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ.²⁴⁸ He also adds that his *laqab* was Sharaf al-Dīn and that he was a teacher of the Shāfi'ī school of jurisprudence (*fiqh*).²⁴⁹ It can be understood from the term 'leading' that he had a high scholarly status. This is even more evident from his teaching at the Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, considered 'the Crown of the Mosques of Egypt', as al-Maqrīzī tells us.²⁵⁰ This is undoubtedly an indication of the distinguished status of this scholar. Al-Suyūṭī provides some additional information regarding him; he states that his *kunya* was Abū 'Abdulla, that he was a scholar of many disciplines, and that, in addition to teaching the Shāfi'ī school of law, he also taught literature in the same mosque.²⁵¹ Al-Suyūṭī also gives the date and place of his birth, as mentioned above.²⁵²

After Muḥammad ibn Khalaf Alla, we find no mention of any of al-Shumunnī's subsequent ancestors until we reach his grandfather, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan. His *kunya* is given as Abū 'Abdulla, although we do not know whether this indicates that he had a son named 'Abdulla (a brother of al-Shumunnī's father), or whether it was merely a *kunya*. As mentioned above, al-Sakhāwī states that he

²⁴⁸ See: p. 93 above.

²⁴⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabṣīr al-Muntabih*, vol. II, p. 748.

²⁵⁰ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, p. 107.

²⁵¹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 101.

²⁵² See: p. 92 above.

died in Alexandria in 771/1369. In addition, al-Suyūṭī indicates that this man had a high level of knowledge, since he describes him—when narrating al-Shumunnī's genealogy—as an *'allāma* (a great scholar in many fields).²⁵³

Lastly, we come to al-Shumunnī's father, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan. In contrast to al-Shumunnī's other ancestors, the biographical works provide valuable information about his father, which enables us to have a clearer picture of him and his influence on his son. There exist a number of biographies of al-Shumunnī's father, the oldest of which appears in the *Inbā' al-Ghumr bi Abnā' al-'Umr* of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī,²⁵⁴ who was his contemporary. Subsequent to this is that of al-Sakhāwī in *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*;²⁵⁵ this is the most valuable of all the biographies. Then comes that of al-Qarāfī in his *Tawshīḥ al-Dībāj*.²⁵⁶ Another biography is found in Ibn al-'Imad al-Ḥanbalī's *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*;²⁵⁷ this is a direct copy of that of Ibn Ḥajar, although this is not mentioned. This is followed by two brief biographies, one in the *Hadiyyat al-'Ārifīn* of al-Babānī,²⁵⁸ and the other in the *al-Risāla al-Mustaṭrafa* of al-Kattānī.²⁵⁹

Muḥammad al-Shumunnī was born in the city of Alexandria in the year 766/1364. His father died when he was about five years old. We are not sure if he had any siblings; however, there is an indication that his father was given the

²⁵³ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 375.

²⁵⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VII, p. 339.

²⁵⁵ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. IX, pp. 74, 75.

²⁵⁶ Al-Qarāfī, Badr al-Dīn. *Tawshīḥ al-Dībāj wa Ḥilyat al-Ibtihāj*. 1st ed. Aḥmad al-Shitaywī. Beirut: Dār al-Gharb, 1983. p. 224.

²⁵⁷ Ibn al-'Imād, vol. VII, p. 151.

²⁵⁸ Al-Babānī, Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad. *Hadiyyat al-'Ārifīn fī Asmā' al-Mu'allifīn wa Āthār al-Muṣannifīn*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya. 1992. vol. VI, p. 183.

²⁵⁹ Al-Kattānī, Muḥammad ibn Ja'far, vol. I, p. 216.

kunya Abū ‘Abdulla—this may be evidence that Muḥammad al-Shumunnī had an elder brother called ‘Abdulla but this may not be the case.

What attracts one's attention, however, is that this orphan showed such an interest in learning that he became one of the most erudite scholars of his era, particularly with regards to the study of Ḥadīth and the Mālikī school of law. It seems that he acquired knowledge and that his scholastic character was formed while he was still in Alexandria, prior to his moving to live in Cairo; however, we do not know whether he left Alexandria while still a student, or not.

In 810/1407 he moved with his family to Cairo.²⁶⁰ We know nothing about the composition of his family, apart from the fact that he was accompanied by his son Taqī al-Dīn (the subject of this thesis). One source reports that Muḥammad al-Shumunnī had another nickname: Abū Shāmil.²⁶¹ This may be an indication that he had an elder son called Shāmil, although there is nothing clear or certain to this effect. When he moved to Cairo he was nearly fifty years old; nevertheless, he continued to exert himself in acquiring knowledge, and in profiting from the teachers there. This is despite the fact that he had himself become famous as a scholar, and had many students. In this regard, we know that in 812/1409 he took lessons in the book *‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*, regarding Sufism, from Shaikh Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ḥanafī.²⁶² He also studied a number of Ḥadīth and *Sīra* (the

²⁶⁰ Ibn Taghrī Bardī *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 101 ; Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 863.

²⁶¹ Al-Kattānī, ‘Abd al-Ḥayy ibn ‘Abd al-Kabīr. *Fahras al-Fahāris wa l-Athbāt wa Mu‘jam al-Ma‘ājim wa l-Mashyakhāt wa l-Musalsalāt*. 2nd ed. by Iḥsān ‘Abās. Beirut: Dār al-Nashr al-‘Arabī al-Islāmī, 1982. vol. I, p. 158.

²⁶² Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi‘*, vol. II, p. 206.

biography of the Prophet) books under the same teacher.²⁶³

When Muḥammad al-Shumunnī came to Cairo, he seems to have been poor. He lived in the al-Madrasa al-Jamāliyya,²⁶⁴ reserved for the leading jurists of the Ḥanafī school of law, and which was one of the foremost *madrasas* of Cairo.²⁶⁵ We do not know how he came to live here despite his being a follower of the Mālikī, and not the Ḥanafī school; his vast knowledge, particularly of Ḥadīth, may have played a role in this, since he became a teacher of Ḥadīth at the school—a position which he acquired with the aid of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.²⁶⁶

It is worth mentioning, regarding the cultural side of Muḥammad al-Shumunnī's life, that he was an acclaimed poet. Unfortunately, hardly any of his poetry has passed down to us—or at least we have not been able to find it in the available sources until now; all that is available is two sections reported by al-Sakhāwī in *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, one comprising seven verses, and the other two.²⁶⁷

Regarding the writings of this scholar, he compiled the following three books:²⁶⁸

- *Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikar*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 104.

²⁶⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VII, p. 339.

²⁶⁵ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz wa l-I'tibār*, vol. III, p. 363.

²⁶⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VII, p. 339.

²⁶⁷ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. IX, p. 79.

²⁶⁸ See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. IX, pp. 74, 75; al-Qarāfī, p. 224; Ibn al-‘Imād, vol. VII, p. 151; al-Babānī, vol. VI, p. 183; al-Kattānī, Muḥammad ibn Ja'far, vol. I, p. 216.

This book is a commentary on a work by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, called *Nukhbat al-Fikar*, regarding the study of Ḥadīth terminology.

- *Nazm Nukhbat al-Fikar*

This book is related to the previous one, being a versification of the prose work *Nukhbat al-Fikar*. This was a practice followed by many scholars, the objective being to facilitate for students the memorization of these works. This particular work is still in circulation and well known amongst the scholars of Ḥadīth until this day. A commentary on it was written by his son, Taqī al-Dīn (the subject of this thesis)—this book will be discussed in the section dealing with the writings of al-Shumunnī.

- *Nazm Nukhab al-Zarā’if*

As is clear from its title, this book is a poem on the book *Nukhab al-Zarā’if*, written by Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Fayrūz’ābādī. Unfortunately we have been unable to determine the nature of this book, or even which field it was in, since the sources content themselves with mentioning its name without commenting on it.

Even the works that give biographies of al-Fayrūz'ābādī mention nothing about this book, despite the fame of its author and his writings, amongst which is *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt*.

Through these last two books of Muḥammad al-Shumunnī it is clear that he had an inclination towards turning works of prose into poetry, a practice which is in conformity with his poetic talents.

Muḥammad al-Shumunnī persisted in his scholarly work in Cairo until the end of 820A.H., when he was afflicted by an illness that he continued to suffer from for several months, until his death on Thursday 11th Rabī' al-Awwal 821A.H. (26/04/1418).

Having spoken about the father of al-Shumunnī, we now move on to talk about his sons, as part of our discussion of his family. In actual fact the sources do not provide us with much information in this regard, as stated above. All the information that we have regarding al-Shumunnī's immediate family we owe to al-Sakhāwī and his book *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*. At the end of his biography of al-Shumunnī he states that the latter had two sons and one daughter. Moreover, it can be understood from the biography that their mother was a slave.²⁶⁹

Little is known further of his children, with only a brief mention of one of his sons, and another of his daughter, being found in the work of al-Sakhāwī. As for the son, al-Sakhāwī mentions him in the biography of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Baqlī.

²⁶⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol.II, p. 178.

There he states that the Atābik (Commander of the Army) was angry with the son of al-Taqī al-Shumunnī and removed him from teaching in the *turba* (mausoleum complex) of Qāyrbāy, giving the position to al-Baqlī instead.²⁷⁰ From this we understand that one of al-Shumunnī's sons was a scholar. However, we have no further information regarding him, and even his name is unknown to us. The historians' disregard of him suggests that he was so obscure that they did not even bother mentioning him; this is in spite of their assiduousness in recording all that they observed, and their rivalry in recording events and the makers of such events.

Mention is made of al-Shumunnī's daughter, in the biography of Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan Shā al-Ḥanafī. This individual became very close to al-Shumunnī whilst studying with him, even becoming engaged to al-Shumunnī's daughter. The marriage was contracted a short time before al-Shumunnī's death; however, the actual wedding did not take place, as it was delayed due to the girl's young age, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan died just seven months after al-Shumunnī.²⁷¹ Thus it seems clear that al-Shumunnī's daughter was born while he was already advanced in years—he died aged over seventy, whilst the girl was still young.

As for the second son, despite detailed investigation, I have not been able to find any information regarding him.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. IV, p. 192.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 271.



2.2.4 The Birth and Early Life of al-Shumunnī

We mentioned previously that information about his life is extremely limited excepting that dealing with his scholarly and cultural life. The reason for this is unclear. It may be that al-Shumunnī himself did not like to speak about his private life, despite his having students interested in every detail of history. These individuals were writing their works on history even during the life of their teacher, and they were interested in whatever piece of information that could be written down and claimed for themselves. Their extant writings are a clear witness to this fact. Thus, when we read the books of Ibn Taghrī Bardī, al-Sakhāwī, or al-Suyūfī, this concern for small details and the desire for writing them down is clearly noticeable. Despite this they neglected this aspect in the biography of their teacher, al-Shumunnī.

Beginning with the birth of al-Shumunnī, we find that all but one of his biographers agreed that he was born during the last ten days of Ramaḍān 801/1399. The only source which differs is the *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* of al-Khuwānsārī, which is alone in giving the year 810/1408.²⁷² Al-Khuwānsārī's source for this is unclear, particularly since his date is at odds with all of al-Shumunnī's students and contemporaries. This might be an error on the part of al-Khuwānsārī, or else he may have confused the date with the year that al-Shumunnī

²⁷² Al-Khuwānsārī, Muḥammad Bāqir. *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-'Ulamā' wa l-Sādāt*. 1st ed. Beirut: al-Dār al-Islāmiyya, 1990. vol. I, p. 349.

and his father moved to Cairo— 810/1408, as stated by Ibn Taghrī Bardī,²⁷³ regardless of the accuracy of this information. At the same time we cannot accept that he was born in 810/1408 because it is completely contrary not only to what is reported unanimously by all of al-Shumunnī's biographers, but also to certain confirmed facts from his life. Thus, it is known that, when al-Shumunnī was a young boy, he met a number of scholars who died before 810/1408. Even al-Khuwānsārī, who offered the anomalous opinion about al-Shumunnī's birth, mentions these scholars; it is not then clear how he managed to overlook this contradiction.

Al-Shumunnī was born in the city of Alexandria, the dwelling place of al-Shumunnī's family at least since the time of his grandfather, who died in this city in 771/1369. It is not known whether any of his earlier ancestors lived here prior to this, or not.

With regard to the birth of al-Shumunnī, and his early life in this city, the sources do not help us. Likewise, the only mention of the date that he moved with his family to Cairo is that given by Ibn Taghrī Bardī in *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, where he points to the year 810/1408. The other sources are satisfied with merely mentioning the relocation to Cairo, without offering a specific date; although it is understood from al-Sakhāwī and al-Suyūṭī that al-Shumunnī came to Cairo at an early time in his life.²⁷⁴

It is also apparent that al-Shumunnī's father took his son to the lessons in

²⁷³ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, II, p. 101.

²⁷⁴ See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi*, vol. II, p. 174; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 376.

Cairo of some of the leading scholars who died before the year 810/1408; for example, Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1402—at which time al-Shumunnī's age was four), Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī (d. 807/1404), and others.²⁷⁵

Does this mean that al-Shumunnī's father lived in Cairo before the date given by Ibn Taghrī Bardī (810/1408)? Or is it merely that he visited Cairo, or frequented it, accompanied by his very young son, before deciding to move there on the said date? In reality, we have so far no answer to this question.

With regard to the nature of al-Shumunnī's early life, we can say that his father took great interest in him from his early childhood, particularly from the scholarly and cultural perspective. The scholarly history of his family may have played a role regarding the atmosphere which surrounded al-Shumunnī; for despite the fact that information concerning the details of his early life is hard to come by, as mentioned above, we can form an image—even if approximate—of the scholarly interest paid to this young boy.

His father was eager to take him to the lessons of leading scholars while still at a very young age. It may be that he wanted to familiarize his son with the scholarly milieu. Amongst those whose lessons he attended was Sirāj al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1402), who was acknowledged as the most learned figure of his age regarding Shāfi'ī jurisprudence, as well as being an expert in a number of other disciplines, such as Ḥadīth, Qur'ānic exegesis, Arabic grammar, and

²⁷⁵ See Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 101; al-Suyūṭī *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, p. 366; Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 863.

others.²⁷⁶ His father also took him to the lessons of Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī (d. 806/1403), considered to be a leading authority in various fields by many scholars of his age.²⁷⁷ In addition, there were three or four scholars of this type to whose lessons al-Shumunnī’s father insisted on bringing his young son. This does not mean that al-Shumunnī actually gained any tangible knowledge from these scholars, since they died while he was not yet eight years old; rather, this was a practice of those interested in educating their children in the Islamic sciences, and particularly in the science of Ḥadīth. Presumably, parents wished their sons to be endowed with the traits and good manners of respected scholars and this could be inculcated by being in their company, and thus they would bring their children to lectures from a very young age.

After al-Shumunnī had reached the age of ten, we find him following the same path. Thus he consistently attended the lessons of scholars, going from one to the next, without limiting himself to any particular discipline. Indeed, he laboured to learn all the different disciplines. In this manner his scholarly personality became formed and he reached a rank that placed him in the class of those scholars to whom students came from every place, eager to learn at their hands.

²⁷⁶ See al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. I, p. 506; al-Ziriklī, vol. V, p. 46.

²⁷⁷ See al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, p. 277; al-Ziriklī, vol. III, p. 344.

2.2.5 His Characteristics and Manners

We know that al-Shumunnī paid great attention to his appearance. His close students who wrote biographies of him allude to him being a very handsome man, with a very cheerful and friendly character.²⁷⁸

Evidence for his abstention from fame and wealth can be found in his declining the office of judge, especially since during his era this position was a source of intense rivalry. Indeed, the Sultan himself urged al-Shumunnī to take on the position. He even resolved to descend from his palace to al-Shumunnī's house to convince him to accept it; however, all attempts failed.²⁷⁹

This perhaps demonstrates a particular characteristic of al-Shumunnī: his inclination to solitude, in spite of his vast number of students and visitors. Thus when Sultan Qāyrbāy offered him residence at his *turba*, which he had built in the Citadel, so as to be an imam and teacher there, al-Shumunnī welcomed the proposal due to the isolation from the hubbub of everyday life that this offered him.²⁸⁰

Al-Shumunnī did not withhold from his friends and students any financial or other assistance he could afford. He was known for his generosity, noble-mindedness, and his love of doing good for others. An example of this is seen with regard to one of his students, Ibn Ṭarīf al-Ḥanafī, when al-Shumunnī exerted his best efforts to find him employment, and showed him great financial assistance

²⁷⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. I, p. 176; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 377.

²⁷⁹ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. I, p. 177; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, p. 366.

²⁸⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. I, p. 176; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 377.

and kindness.²⁸¹

Another of the traits which characterized al-Shumunnī was patience, inasmuch as he suffered from numerous health problems, from which he was rarely free since the time of his youth, yet he tolerated all with little complaint.²⁸²

Another noteworthy characteristic of al-Shumunnī was his acute intelligence. This may have helped him, in addition to a number of other factors, to comprehend such a large number of disciplines. This characteristic brought him closer to his most distinguished teachers, such as Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, considered one of the most famous and outstanding scholars of Ḥadīth to have lived following the early centuries of Islam. Al-Shumunnī’s intelligence played a great role in bringing him nearer to Ibn Ḥajar. Certain questions arose in lessons that required intelligence and discernment; al-Shumunnī was quick-witted and gave answers that delighted Ibn Ḥajar, thus bringing al-Shumunnī closer to his teacher.²⁸³

Moreover, due to his outstanding intellect, some of his leading teachers, for example al-Sīrāmī, would treat al-Shumunnī as an adversary, asking him to debate with him during his lessons. At the time, al-Shumunnī was still a youth, and so this helped to raise his status in the eyes of his fellow students.²⁸⁴

To his acute intelligence can be added al-Shumunnī’s powerful memory. This was a cause of amazement for his peers and students. He would teach the

²⁸¹ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. I, p. 352.

²⁸² Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. I, p. 177.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 175; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu’ā*, vol. I, p. 377.

²⁸⁴ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. X, p. 266.

primary works in a number of different disciplines without needing to consult them.²⁸⁵

2.2.6 His Scholarly Status and his Legal and Theological Schools

Most scholars and intellectuals can be classified according to the science or art for which they are most famous; thus they are referred to by the field in which they have excelled. One might say, for example, the jurist, the scholar of Ḥadīth, the grammarian, and so forth. However, it is extremely difficult to affiliate al-Shumunnī to any one particular branch of knowledge.

Al-Shumunnī studied a large number of disciplines, excelling in many of them to an extent where he became a leading authority. In addition to the majority of the religious sciences and the sciences of Arabic language, we find that al-Shumunnī studied the natural sciences, such as arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, all of which he excelled in.²⁸⁶ Likewise, he studied medicine under the most skilled teachers of his era.²⁸⁷ This does not mean that he became a physician; rather, he merely excelled in the medical knowledge of that age, teaching it as an academic discipline without practicing it. Among al-Shumunnī's students in the field of medicine was the great scholar Abū al-Majd al-Talkhāwī.²⁸⁸ Indeed, al-Shumunnī did not neglect any field of knowledge without studying it. He reached

²⁸⁵ Al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. I, p. 120.

²⁸⁶ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, II, pp. 102, 103.

²⁸⁷ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi*, vol. I, p. 175.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 115.

a level of knowledge that made students proud to have studied under him. Thus al-Sakhāwī states:²⁸⁹ “The majority of the learned, from all the different schools, from Egypt and elsewhere became al-Shumunnī’s students”; indeed, al-Suyūṭī describes him as being without equal.²⁹⁰

Al-Shumunnī was also distinguished by the fact that he used to teach the foremost works on a subject, those which only the leading scholars would teach. Examples of such books are the work on Qur’ānic exegesis, *al-Kashshāf* by al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Muṭawwal* on Arabic rhetoric by al-Taftāzānī, the largest book in this field, and the *Sharḥ al-Kāfiya* of al-Raḍī, one of the greatest book of Arabic grammar. This was also the case with the other disciplines which al-Shumunnī undertook to teach. As a result he became a leading teacher in a number of *madrasas*; indeed, the owners, and those in charge of the *madrasas* were eager that al-Shumunnī should be one of their heads or teachers.²⁹¹

Further to that mentioned above, al-Shumunnī occasionally composed poetry. All that remains of his poetry is four verses: two of these are given by many of al-Shumunnī’s biographers, while the other two have been mentioned solely by Ibn Taghrī Bardī in *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, where he states that they were composed by al-Shumunnī during his youth.²⁹²

We are unable to judge his poetic abilities from just these few verses but, in

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 177.

²⁹⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. I, p. 377.

²⁹¹ See Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, pp. 103,104; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. II, p. 177. al-Suyūṭī *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, p. 366; Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 863.

²⁹² Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p.104.

any case, it is clear that al-Shumunnī did not pay a great deal of attention to this pursuit. No doubt his students and biographers would have preserved more of his poetical works if it had been an important area of al-Shumunnī's endeavours.

Yet in the context of literature, it is worth mentioning that al-Shumunnī had considerable literary ability, being highly capable of articulating himself in different styles, and using beautiful expressions.²⁹³ This is a characteristic rarely found in scholars not specializing in the field of literature.

A-Shumunnī's family originally followed the Mālikī school of Islamic law. This is in spite of a forefather of his having been reported to be a teacher of the Shāfi'ī school in the Mosque of 'Amr ibn al-'Ās.²⁹⁴ We do not know whether the reason for this is because he was an adherent of the Shāfi'ī school, or whether he was a Mālikī—as has been the case with the people of the Maghreb for many centuries—and only taught the Shāfi'ī school for some particular reason. Al-Shumunnī's father and grandfather, however, were followers of the Mālikī school.²⁹⁵

A-Shumunnī himself, during the earlier part of his life was an adherent of the Mālikī school, like his father and ancestors. Then, when he had reached thirty-three years of age he transferred his allegiance to the Ḥanafī school. One possible reason for this change is his deep admiration for his teacher Yahya al-Sīrāmī al-

²⁹³ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 176.

²⁹⁴ See: pp. 92,93 above.

²⁹⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 375.

Ḥanafī (d. 833/1430). Al-Shumunnī accompanied this scholar very closely and studied a number of disciplines with him, including Ḥanafī jurisprudence. Al-Shumunnī resembled his teacher al-Sīrāmī in many of his characteristics, and even in the types of sciences in which he excelled. His admiration for al-Sīrāmī was huge despite the fact that al-Shumunnī kept the company of dozens of distinguished scholars under whom he studied. His attachment was such that after the death of al-Sīrāmī, he even attended the lessons of the latter's son, “Abd al-Rahmān al-Sīrāmī (813/1411-880/1475) who was al-Shumunnī's junior by more than ten years. It seems that al-Shumunnī changed to the Ḥanafī school about one year after the death of al-Sīrāmī mainly due to the son's influence.²⁹⁶ Al-Shumunnī excelled in Ḥanafī jurisprudence, such that he became a leading teacher in the al-Madrasa al-Jamāliyya, one of Cairo's greatest *madrasas* and which was exclusively for Ḥanafī scholars.²⁹⁷

In his theology and doctrine al-Shumunnī followed the Ash‘arī scholastic tradition. In fact, he was an undisputed master of scholastic theology according to Ash‘arī methodology and he used to teach the school's foremost works.²⁹⁸ Even his commentary on *Mughnī al-labīb*, the topic of this thesis, is not free from theological issues that reveal his Ash‘arī leanings.²⁹⁹ Interestingly, given the differences between scholastic theologians and Ḥadīth specialists, al-Shumunnī

²⁹⁶ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. II, p. 174; al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-‘Iqyān*, p.42; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī’*, vol. I, p. 120.

²⁹⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā‘iz wa l-I’tibār*, vol. III, p. 363.

²⁹⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. II, p. 175; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. I, p. 376.

²⁹⁹ See al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 203.

was also a leading Ḥadīth scholar. This is unusual as for the most part Ḥadīth scholars kept themselves away from delving into scholastic theology and were often very hostile to those who ventured into theological matters.

In addition, al-Shumunnī had unusual leanings for a Ḥadīth scholar in having had an inclination towards Sufism; in fact, he even became a Sufi shaikh in one *madrasa*.³⁰⁰ Combining Ḥadīth study, scholastic theology, and Sufism is rare. It should be said, however, that the Sufism of al-Shumunnī was far from that type of Sufism which hinted towards the idea of divine union or a metaphysical monism; indeed, al-Shumunni used to severely criticize those who followed this kind of Sufism.³⁰¹

2.2.7 The Death of al-Shumunnī

It was mentioned above that al-Shumunnī suffered from many illnesses, and that these accompanied him from the time of his youth, although he used to bear them with considerable patience. These health problems did not prevent him from carrying out his role as a teacher and scholar. He suffered repeatedly from nosebleeds, the reason for which is unknown, and also from kidney-stones. No doubt because of this, al-Shumunnī was careful to look after his health, being mindful with regard to his food, drink, and other aspects of his lifestyle.

³⁰⁰ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 176.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 176.

Undoubtedly, his knowledge of medicine played a significant role in his health consciousness.

At the end of AH 872, his health began to deteriorate. Sources state that he suffered from ascites, perhaps caused by the condition of his kidneys, or of some other vital organ, such as his heart or liver. In addition, during his final days, he suffered from ophthalmia. Al-Shumunnī passed away on the evening of Saturday 17th Dhū l-Hijja 872 (16/07/1468).³⁰²

2.2.8 The Works of al-Shumunnī

As is the norm for those scholars who have contributed to the Islamic cultural heritage, al-Shumunnī authored a number of scholarly works, covering a number of different fields, such as grammar, jurisprudence, Ḥadīth, and the biography of the Prophet. After significant research and investigation into the works of al-Shumunnī, I have found the titles of seven books that were written by him: two on grammar, two on jurisprudence, one on Ḥadīth terminology, one on the biography of the Prophet, and one whose subject I have been unable to discover.

Only one of the above-mentioned books has been printed in a modern, critical edition, this being the book that deals with Ḥadīth terminology: *al-‘Ālī al-Rutba fī Sharḥ Nazm al-Nukhba*.³⁰³ There are two books that have been printed in an old, uncritical edition, one on grammar: *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām ‘alā Mughnī*

³⁰² *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 177,78.

³⁰³ 1st ed. by Ḥārūn al-Jazā’irī. Beirut: Dār ibn Ḥazm, 2003.

Ibn Hishām,³⁰⁴ and the other on the biography of the Prophet: *Muzīl al-Khafā ‘an Alfāz al-Shifā*.³⁰⁵ One of the books is still in the form of a manuscript: *Kamāl al-Dirāya fī Sharḥ al-Nuqāya*. The three remaining books are still missing, and it is not known where they are located, if indeed they exist at all.

Following is a discussion of the various works of al-Shumunnī:

- *Al-Munṣif min al-Kalām ‘alā Mughnī Ibn Hishām*

This is the book which is the subject of this thesis, and a detailed discussion of it will be given in the subsequent chapter.

- *Muzīl al-Khafā ‘an Alfāz al-Shifā*

This book is a commentary on a work on the biography of the Prophet, entitled *al-Shifā bi Ta’rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, written by al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ al-Yahṣubī (496-544).

This book is one of those which has been printed and is in circulation. It is a concise commentary on the *al-Shifā*. As is understood from its title, it is a linguistic commentary on the words given in this book; that is to say it looks at

³⁰⁴ Published in Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Bahiyya, AH 1305.

³⁰⁵ Published in Beirut: Dār al-Maktaba al-‘Ilmiyya, n.d.

the ambiguous words given in the *al-Shifā*, and explains their meanings. This is exactly what al-Shumunnī has done in this book, although he has not limited himself to just this. The book includes important comments about a number of points, which show al-Shumunnī's profound learning. Thus it is strange that we find that al-Shawkānī mentions the book with some degree of criticism, claiming that it only contains linguistic explanations that could have been given by the most low-grade student if he were in possession of the book *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*.³⁰⁶ There seems no explanation for this comment of al-Shawkānī, except that he cannot have examined the work sufficiently.

Turning to the book itself, we find that al-Shumunnī depends upon numerous sources for his explanations. Of the dictionaries we notice that the *al-Ṣiḥaḥ* of al-Jawharī is the most cited work, followed by the *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* of al-Fayrūz'ābādī. Regarding those works dealing with uncommon vocabulary, al-Shumunnī refers often to the *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* of Ibn al-Athīr. Also, there are references to books on Qur'ānic exegesis, and amongst them the work of al-Baghawī. The *al-Shifā* is replete with Ḥadīth material and al-Shumunnī shows great interest in these. He refers to the books of Ḥadīth and their commentaries. For example we find him referring to the commentary on the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī by Ibn al-'Arabī called *'Aṛīḍat al-Aḥwadhī fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tirmidhī*. In addition, reference is made to those books of al-Dhahabī that deal with the trustworthiness of the Ḥadīth narrators, as well as those

³⁰⁶ Al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭālī*, vol. I, p. 120.

works related in some way to the study of Ḥadīth, such as the *al-Mawḍū'āt* of Ibn al-Jawzī which deals with Ḥadīth materials Ibn al-Jawzī claimed were spurious.

Furthermore, there are very many of books and reference works, covering various fields, to which al-Shumunnī refers, and from which he benefits. To mention and comment on them all would require a separate thesis.

- *Al-'Ālī al-Rutba fī Sharḥ Naẓm al-Nukhba*

When speaking about al-Shumunnī's father we saw that he authored a book entitled *Naẓm Nukhbat al-Fikr*. Al-Shumunnī's work is a commentary on this book of his father's, which in turn explains the *Nukhbat al-Fikr* of Ibn Ḥajar. The book thus deals with the science of Ḥadīth terminology. The work has been recently published.³⁰⁷

The book is a medium sized work in the field of Ḥadīth terminology, with the number of verses in the primary text, his father's *Naẓm Nukhbat al-Fikr*, reaching 211 verses. Al-Shumunnī then gives a medium length explanation of these verses as compared with other commentaries.

He began composing it in response to his students' requests while teaching it and it seems that al-Shumunnī did not write his commentary all at

³⁰⁷ See: p. 113 above.

one time. Rather, he would make alterations to it as he saw fit whilst he was still teaching the primary text until he was satisfied that his commentary was completed.³⁰⁸

The work demonstrates the scholarly abilities of al-Shumunnī and his wide learning as it contains a wide breadth of information, and rages over many fields. However, what attracts one's attention is the linguistic quality of the work. Despite the fact that the book deals specifically with the science of Ḥadīth terminology, the linguistic side of the work receives a large part of al-Shumunnī's attention. Thus he is keen to explain the precise linguistic significance of many of the words and he delves at length on grammatical points of interest.

- *Awfaq al-Masālik fī Ta'diyat al-Manāsik*

This is one the books of al-Shumunnī which has been lost, or which we have not been able to find. The first one to mention this work was al-Suyūṭī in his book *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*.³⁰⁹ It is not mentioned by any other of al-Shumunnī's biographers, although it was mentioned by Ḥājī Khalīfa in *Kashf al-Zunūn*.³¹⁰

From its title the book appears to have been written about the rules regarding the Hajj, showing that it was a book of jurisprudence. Nothing is

³⁰⁸ Al-Shumunnī, *al- 'Ālī al-Rutba*, p. 36.

³⁰⁹ Al-Suyūṭī *Husn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. I, p. 366.

³¹⁰ Ḥājī Khalīfa, vol. I, p. 202.

known about the nature of the book with regards to its size, manner of composition, and so forth.

- *Manhaj al-Sālik fī Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik*

Ḥājī Khalīfa is the sole person to mention this work in his book *Kashf al-Zunūn*, where he attributes it to al-Shumunnī. Ḥājī Khalīfa states that he examined the work, and describes it as a marvelous, learned book. Indeed he emphasizes this even more so by mentioning a small part of the book's introduction.³¹¹

It is by no means unusual that al-Shumunnī should write a commentary on Ibn Mālik's poem about grammar, the *Alfiyya*, since al-Shumunnī was one of the leading lights of his time in the field of the Arabic language. The *Alfiyya* was considered at that time one of the principal texts, which no one with any interest in the Arabic language, and particularly grammar, could ignore. We also know that al-Shumunnī showed interest in commentaries on this work, because he used to teach them to his students. Reference is made in the biographical works to a commentary of al-Murādī on the *Alfiyya*, whereby we find under the biography of Muḥammad al-Naṣībī that he studied some of al-Murādī's commentary at the hands of al-Shumunnī.³¹² Reference is also made

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 152.

³¹² Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. VIII, p. 259.

to Ibn ‘Aqīl’s commentary on the *Alfiyya* within the biography of the famous historian Ibn Taghrī Bardī; he is reported to have studied it under al-Shumunnī in addition to a number of other books on various fields.³¹³

- *Kamāl al-Dirāya fī Sharḥ al-Nuqāya*

This is one of al-Shumunnī’s famous works, mentioned by all his biographers. It is a work on jurisprudence, being a commentary on the book of Ḥanafī jurisprudence, *al-Nuqāya*, by ‘Ubaydulla ibn Mas‘ūd al-Maḥbūbī (d. 747/1346).

Al-Shumunnī’s work is still in manuscript form, yet there are many copies of it spread throughout the libraries of the world. Brockelmann mentions that there are fifteen manuscript copies,³¹⁴ although the *al-Fihris al-Shāmil li-l-Turāth al-‘Arabī al-Islāmī al-Makḥṭūṭ* numbers more than seventy.³¹⁵

The work covers almost all topics of jurisprudence, both those dealing with worship, and with *mu‘āmalāt* (social interaction). Ḥanafī jurists have shown great interest in this book, citing it and quoting from it extensively in their works; this is particularly the case with the two famous works, the *Kanz*

³¹³ *Ibid.*, vol.X, p. 305.

³¹⁴ Brockelmann, vol. III, p. 697.

³¹⁵ *Al-Fihris al-Shāmil li-l-Turāth al-‘Arabī al-Islāmī al-Makḥṭūṭ: al-Fiḥ wa Uṣūluḥ*. Amman: Mu’assasat Āl al-Bayt li l-Fikr al-Islāmī, 2002. vol. VIII, pp. 390-395.

al-Daqā'iq of al-Nasafī and the *Radd al-Muḥtār* of ibn 'Ābdīn.

It should be mentioned that al-Shumunnī shows his linguistic leanings in this book, despite it being in the field of jurisprudence. Thus can be seen references to different linguistic issues.

- *Sharḥ Naẓm Nukhab al-Zarā'if*

In our discussion of al-Shumunnī's father, we saw that he authored a book entitled *Naẓm Nukhab al-Zarā'if*,³¹⁶ in which—as can be gathered from its title—he put the work *Nukhab al-Zarā'if* into verse. We also mentioned there that this latter was one of the books of al-Fayrūz'ābādī, although we were unable to determine the nature of this book, or in which field it was.

This book of al-Shumunnī's has only been mentioned by Ḥājī Khalīfa in *Kashf al-Zunūn*³¹⁷ but he does not enlighten us as to its nature, just as he adds nothing when mentioning the book of al-Shumunnī's father. Therefore, we know nothing about this book except that al-Shumunnī commentated on the work of his father, which was itself a commentary on the *Nukhab al-Zarā'if* of al-Fayrūz'ābādī.

³¹⁶ See: p. 98 above.

³¹⁷ Ḥājī Khalīfa, vol. II, p. 1935.

2.2.9 Al-Shumunnī's Teachers

By studying the works that offer a biography of, or refer to al-Shumunnī, we are able to find the names of forty-nine of al-Shumunnī's teachers, covering a variety of different fields. This does not necessarily mean that al-Shumunnī actually studied with all of these, since some of them died while al-Shumunnī was still at a very young age; one quarter of these scholars died before al-Shumunnī was ten years old. During that era it was customary for parents interested in learning to bring their children to scholars' lessons so that it be recorded in their biographies that they had sat before this or that scholar.

Since his early years, al-Shumunnī seems to have enjoyed distinguished scholarly attention from his father. Thus we can see the latter's insistence on his son's attending the lessons of scholars while still a child of less than seven years of age. And no sooner had he begun to grow up than he started attending the private study circles of scholars and accompanying them closely. This allowed him to surpass his fellow students in gaining knowledge of, and excelling in a wide range of subjects.³¹⁸

Here we shall mention a number of the teachers under whom al-Shumunnī studied, and particularly those that played a role in forming his scholarly personality. I will limit myself to fourteen individuals from amongst those scholars whose names have been listed in the reference works as being teachers of al-

³¹⁸ See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 176; Farrūkh, vol. III, p. 863.

Shumunnī. The reason for this is that the sources have mentioned the subject, or subjects, which al-Shumunnī studied at the hands of these fourteen. As for the other individuals, they have merely been listed, with no indication being given of the type of knowledge gained, or the nature of the studentship. I will list the teachers in accordance with the chronology of their deaths.

- **Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Shumunnī al-Mālikī (766/1364-821/1418).**

This is the father of the al-Shumunnī whose life and work is the subject of this thesis. We have already spoken about him during our discussion of al-Shumunnī's family.

His son studied under him the Arabic language.³¹⁹

- **Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Zarātī al-Ḥanafī (748/1347-825/1422).**

He was a scholar of the various Qur’ānic recitations. He traveled from place to place in search of knowledge of the different recitations. Thus he went to al-Shām, visiting Damascus and Aleppo, before returning to Cairo. There he

³¹⁹ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manḥal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p.101.

became one of the cities most famous scholars of Qur'ānic recitation, becoming the imam of this discipline in Cairo's al-Madrasa al-Barqūqiyya. He subsequently became the leading scholar of Qur'ānic recitation in the whole of Egypt, students coming to him from all the other provinces.³²⁰

Al-Shumunnī studied under al-Zarātī in AH 817, as has been mentioned by Ibn Taghrī Bardī in *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*.³²¹

- **Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Īsā al-Ṣanhājī al-Mālikī (d. 827/1423).**

He used to live in the al-Azhar Mosque, and was famous for a number of disciplines, in particular Arabic, jurisprudence, and the different recitations of the Qur'ān. He was also renowned for spending his time in teaching, both by day and by night.³²²

Al-Shumunnī studied under him Arabic and Mālikī jurisprudence.³²³

- **Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Bāranbārī al-Shāfi'ī (d. 832/1428).**

He used to move between Cairo and Damietta for teaching. He excelled in a

³²⁰ See al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, vol. VII, p. 71; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VII, p. 482.

³²¹ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 101.

³²² Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VIII, p. 50.

³²³ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 101; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 174.

number of disciplines but in particular jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence (*usūl al-fiqh*), the Arabic language, and arithmetic. In addition, he was a preacher and a muftī, as well as one of the teachers at the al-Madrasa al-Jamāliyya in Cairo. He became paralyzed four years prior to his death.³²⁴

Al-Shumunnī profited from him in a number of subjects, the most important of which were metrics, studying with him the *al-Khazrajiyya*, a poem on the science of metrics; arithmetic, and in particular the *al-Nuzha* of Ibn al-Hā'im; and the laws relating to the distribution of estates.³²⁵

- **Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shaṭnūfī al-Shāfi'ī (d. 832/1429).**

He came from the village of Shaṭnūf, in the province of al-Munūfiyya. The year of his birth is unknown, although the sources indicate that it was after the year AH 750 he came to Cairo while still in his youth, and studied various disciplines, before excelling in jurisprudence, the Arabic language, the laws relating to the distribution of estates, and the various recitations of the Qur'ān. He was one of the leading teachers in the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn and in the al-Madrasa al-Shaykhūniyya. He also taught in the al-Azhar Mosque.³²⁶

³²⁴ Al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, vol. VII, p. 198; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VIII, p. 189; Ibn Taghrī Bardī *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. XV, p. 153; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 169.

³²⁵ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 102; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 175.

³²⁶ Al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, vol. VII, p. 198; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VIII, p. 187; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 10.

From the words of Ibn Taghrī Bardī it appears that al-Shumunnī closely accompanied al-Shaṭnūfī for some period of time, although we are unable to determine the length of this period or its date. Al-Sakhāwī mentions that al-Shumunnī benefited from al-Shaṭnūfī with regard to the Arabic language.³²⁷

• **Nizām al-Dīn Yaḥya ibn Yūsuf al-Sīrāmī al-Ḥanafī (d. 833/1430).**

His origins stem from the city of Tibrīz, and it may be that he was born there and then subsequently came to Cairo with his father, as some sources indicate. He was born prior to the year AH 780, with some sources favouring the year AH 777. Al-Sīrāmī dazzled those who wrote his biographies, due to his extreme intelligence and his mastery of both the intellectual and religious sciences. They mention a large number of disciplines in which he excelled, such as jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence, theology, the Arabic language, rhetoric, algebra, the differences between the legal schools (*‘ilm al-ikhtilāf*), logic, medicine, wisdom, and astronomy. This is in addition to the outstanding moral characteristics which he was said to possess.³²⁸

As for his relationship with al-Shumunnī, we can clearly assert that he was one of the three scholarly personalities whom had a leading influence on the life of al-Shumunnī. Al-Shumunnī accompanied him extremely closely and

³²⁷ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 102; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. II, p. 175.

³²⁸ Al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, vol. VII, p. 218; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā’ al-Ghumr*, vol. VIII, p. 224; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. X, p. 266.

learned from him most of the sciences.³²⁹ He was also largely influenced by his personality, and it may be that this personality was the primary factor in al-Shumunnī's changing his school of law from the Mālikī to the Ḥanafī school, as stated above.³³⁰

- **Abū Bakr Naṣrullāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-‘Ajamī al-Ḥanafī (766/1365-833/1430).**

He was a famous physician, born in one of the villages near the city of Royan in Ṭabaristān. He came to Cairo after the year 800. He excelled in philosophy, Sufism, and certain other sciences. He taught in the al-Madrassa al-Manṣūriyya, where he also lodged. He became a physician at the al-Manṣūr Hospital, where he subsequently became the most senior ranked employee in the whole hospital.³³¹

Al-Shumunnī studied under him logic and the art of debating.³³²

- **Sirāj al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn Manṣūr al-Bahādurī al-Ḥanafī (d. 834/1431).**

He was born during the decade following the year AH 760. He excelled in

³²⁹ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p.103; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 174; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, vol. II, p. 232.

³³⁰ See: p. 111 above.

³³¹ Al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, vol. VII, p. 220; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VIII, p. 223.

³³² Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p.103; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 175.

medicine, becoming the chief of all of the doctors of Egypt. He was also skilled in jurisprudence and the Arabic language, so much so that he became one of the leading judges.³³³

Ibn Taghrī Bardī mentions that al-Shumunnī studied medicine under al-Bahādūrī, but besides this there is no further information about al-Shumunnī's studying under this scholar.³³⁴

- **'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bukhārī al-Ḥanafī (779/1377-841/1438).**

Al-Suyūṭī describes him as the most erudite scholar of his time. He moved between a number of countries, including Egypt, al-Shām, India, and others. He excelled in a large number of sciences, both intellectual and religious.³³⁵

Al-Bukhārī is considered one of the three teachers who had the greatest influence on al-Shumunnī, whom he taught the principles of jurisprudence and Ḥanafī jurisprudence, as well as rhetoric.³³⁶

- **Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Busāṭī al-Mālikī (d. 842/1439).**

³³³ See al-Maqrīzī *al-Sulūk*, vol. VII, p. 220; Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. VIII, p. 242; Ibn Taghrī Bardī *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, vol. XV, p. 172.

³³⁴ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 103.

³³⁵ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. II, p. 200.

³³⁶ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p. 103; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 174.

He was one of the leading scholars of Egypt. Originally from the al-Gharbiyya province, he came to Cairo and occupied himself with the acquisition of knowledge until he reached a high rank in a number of sciences—mentioned in the sources as being as many as twenty.³³⁷

Amongst those subjects in which he became famous were Arabic language, philosophy, logic, mathematics with its various branches, jurisprudence, rhetoric with its various branches, medicine, and others.

He is the third of those scholars who played a leading role in the formation of al-Shumunnī's scholarly personality, after al-Sīrāmī and al-Bukhārī. Al-Shumunnī accompanied him closely and studied with him grammar, rhetoric, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, theology, logic, and other subjects.³³⁸

- **Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Rajab ibn al-Majdī al-Shāfi'ī (767/1366-850/1447).**

He was one of those scholars who combined the mathematical and the religious sciences. Thus he excelled in arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, jurisprudence,

³³⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *Inbā' al-Ghumr*, vol. IX pp. 82ff.

³³⁸ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p.102; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 174.

grammar, and the laws relating to the distribution of estates.³³⁹

Al-Shumunnī benefited from him in the areas of arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy.³⁴⁰

- **Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī al-Shāfi‘ī (773/1372-852/1449).**

This is the famous scholar of Ḥadīth, whose fame has spread throughout the world. We spoke about him when discussing cultural life during al-Shumunnī’s era.³⁴¹

Al-Shumunnī studied under him the science of Ḥadīth, studying the thousand line poem, *al-Alfiyya*, of al-‘Irāqī on the same subject in the year 832. He also studied with him a number of other books.³⁴²

- **Khidr Shāh al-Rūmī al-Ḥanafī (d. 853/1449).**

He was born in Europe, or perhaps in the region of Asia Minor. He came to Cairo after having already studied a number of sciences in his own country. There he stayed for fifteen years, studying and teaching in the al-Madrassa al-

³³⁹ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu‘ā*, vol. I, p. 307; al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-‘Iqyān*, p.42; al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-Ṭāli‘*, vol. I, p. 56; al-Ziriklī, vol. I, p. 125.

³⁴⁰ Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p.103; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi‘*, vol. II, p. 175.

³⁴¹ See: p. 79 above.

³⁴² Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *al-Manhal al-Ṣāfi*, vol. II, p.103; al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw‘ al-Lāmi‘*, vol. II, p. 175.

Janbakiyya. He then returned to his own country, and became one of the scholars in the sultan's palace.³⁴³

Al-Shumunnī profited from him in the field of theology.³⁴⁴

- **Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Balādūrī**

I have been unable to find a biography for this scholar, although al-Sakhāwī mentions in *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'* that he was one of al-Shumunnī's teachers in the field of medicine, and that he was the most knowledgeable scholar of medicine in his era.³⁴⁵

2.2.10 Al-Shumunnī's Students

After consulting a number of biographical works, deemed to contain some information about al-Shumunnī's students, I have found that there are a considerable number of his students whose names can be found scattered throughout the biographical works. This is particularly the case with al-Sakhāwī's *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, considered—as mentioned above—the largest encyclopedia of biographies of figures from the 9th Islamic century, during which al-Shumunnī

³⁴³ Al-Ghazzī, Taqī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Qādir. *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Saniyya fī tarājim al-Ḥanafīyya*. 1st ed. by 'Abd al-Fatāḥ al-Ḥulū. Riyadh: Dār al-Rifā'ī, 1983. vol. III, p. 204.

³⁴⁴ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 175.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 175.

lived.

The number of al-Shumunnī's students mentioned is 104. Some of these have been mentioned as having studied under al-Shumunnī, without any indication being given as to the science taught; the number of these is 36. As for the other 68 students, the sources which have included their biographies have stated the science or sciences that they studied under al-Shumunnī.

What is apparent is the wide variety of disciplines which these students studied under al-Shumunnī. This point has been mentioned by al-Suyūṭī in his biography of al-Shumunnī, where he states:³⁴⁶

He was a leader and extremely learned in many sciences; having no peer; perspicacious...multitudes benefited from him and would crowd around him, and would boast of learning under him.

We have already mentioned that the most famous students of al-Shumunnī were amongst the leading historians, these being:³⁴⁷

- 1- Abū al-Maḥāsin ibn Taghrī Bardī.
- 2- 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī.
- 3- Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī.

³⁴⁶ Al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, p. 377.

³⁴⁷ See: pp. 81ff above.

In addition, his students included a large number of famous figures and scholars, amongst the most prominent of which were:

- **Nāsīr al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Kinānī al-Shāfi‘ī (826/1452-895/1490).**

He studied under al-Shumunnī the Arabic language, Qur’ānic exegesis, and Ḥadīth.³⁴⁸

- **Zayn al-Dīn Ja‘far ibn Ibrāhīm al-Sanhūrī al-Shāfi‘ī (810/1407-894/1489).**

He was one of those who accompanied al-Shumunnī closely whilst he studied with him. He studied under him theology, the principles of jurisprudence, and the Arabic language with its various branches.³⁴⁹

- **Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī al-Fakhrī al-Ḥanafī (838/1435-872/1468).**

He attached himself to al-Shumunnī and studied under him a number of subjects, including jurisprudence, arithmetic, and metrics.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw’ al-Lāmi’*, vol. II, p. 182.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 68.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 196.

- **Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Zakariyyā al-Suhaylī al-Shāfi‘ī (814/1411-872/1468).**

He paid particular attention to the intellectual sciences. He stayed in al-Shumunnī's company closely for fifteen years studying these sciences.³⁵¹

- **‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Nuwayrī al-Mālikī (815/1412-882/1477).**

He studied under al-Shumunnī a number of sciences, including Ḥadīth and the principles of jurisprudence.³⁵²

- **Muḥammad ibn Khalīl al-Bilbīsī al-Shāfi‘ī (819/1416-888/1483).**

He studied under al-Shumunnī Qur’ānic exegesis, and in particular the *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhshari and the exegetical work of *al-Bayḍāwī*.

In addition he studied the Arabic language, and theology.³⁵³

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vol. V, p. 221.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 12.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. VII, p. 235.

CHAPTER 3 ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE BOOK AL-MUNŞIF MIN AL-KALĀM ‘ALĀ MUGHNĪ IBN HISHĀM

3.1 Al-Shumunnī’s Methodology

Al-Shumunnī does not mention all of the text of *Mughnī al-Labīb*, nor does he comment upon every single matter. Rather, he selects topics on which there is criticism from Ibn al-Sā’igh and al-Damāmīnī, while also selectively treating the rest of *Mughnī al-Labīb*, by extracting those words, phrases, or sentences which he wishes to explain, and commenting on only these, rather than the full text.

Al-Shumunnī uses his extensive learning for the task he set himself, and by analyzing his comments, we are able to set out the characteristics of his methodology.

3.1.1 Lexicology and Etymology

Al-Shumunnī is concerned with the explanation of the linguistic meanings of

obscure and difficult words. Looking at the wide variety of lexical and etymological comments made by al-Shumunnī in his work, one can conclude that his concerns were primarily to do with lexicology and etymology rather than syntax. Thus, at times we see him anxious to clarify the origins of words; for example:³⁵⁴

قوله: (ألستم خير من ركب المطايا... إلخ) في الصحاح: قال الأصمعي:
المطية: التي تمط في سيرها, قال: وهو مأخوذ من (المطو) أي: المد.
والندى: الجود, وفلان أندى من فلان إذا كان أكثر خيرا منه. والراح هنا:
جمع راحة وهي الكف

Al-Shumunnī does not complete the verse that requires explanation, the second part of which is: وأندى العالمين بطون راح. We notice that he clarifies that the word المطية is derived from المطو, which means ‘stretching’. Likewise he explains that الندى means ‘generosity’, and الراح is the plural of راحة, meaning ‘the palm of the hand’.

Furthermore, he sometimes explains other aspects of a verse of poetry beyond the linguistic, so as to make it more understandable.³⁵⁵

قوله: (يا ليتما أمانا شالت نعامتها... إلخ) هذا البيت لسعد بن قرط بن

³⁵⁴ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām* vol. I, p. 34.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 130.

سيار, وكان عاقاً لأمه, وكانت بارة به. والنعامة: جماعة القوم. وشالت
 نعماتهم: ذهبوا وتفرقوا, قيل: تحولوا عن دارهم, وقيل: قلّ خبرهم وذلت
 أمورهم. والمعنى: ليت أمنا فارقتنا بالموت

Here al-Shumunnī quotes only a portion of the verse, the remainder of which is:

أيما إلى جنة أيما إلى نار.

It would be very difficult to understand this verse of poetry without the clarification of certain obscure phrases, such as شالت نعماتهم (which in this context means ‘scattered and dispersed’). Also, it is important for us to know the son’s attitude towards his mother.

Al-Shumunnī does not offer this information without reference to further sources, and we can divide the lexical and etymological resources which he uses into three main categories: dictionaries, the book of al-Damāmīnī (*Tuhfat al-Gharīb ‘alā Mughnī al-Labīb*), and other sources.

Concerning the dictionaries, al-Shumunnī depends greatly upon *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* of al-Jawharī (d. 393/1003), and to a lesser extent on the *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* of al-Fayrūz’ābādī (729/1329-817/1415). In addition, there are a few references to Ibn

Sīda al-Andalūsī.

As for *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, I have found that al-Shumunnī refers to it 246 times; however, it is not clear whether he himself quoted all these directly from *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*. The reason is that there are 60 apparent quotations from *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* in the first third of the book (from its beginning up to the chapter dealing with the particle ف), of which 24 were already given by al-Damāmīnī; this was not mentioned by al-Shumunnī. Some of these 24 have been transcribed identically as they appear in al-Damāmīnī, for example:³⁵⁶

قوله: (من أهل العالفة) في الصحاح: هي ما فوق نجد إلى أرض تهامة
وإلى ما وراء مكة، وهي الحجاز وما والاها. والنسبة إليها: عالي. ويقال
أيضاً: علوي، على غير قياس.

Whilst some of them have been quoted in summary form, like the following:³⁵⁷

قوله: (إذا اسودّ جنح الليل... إلخ) جنح الليل- بضم الجيم وكسر ها-: طائفة
منه. والخطا: جمع كثرة للخطوة- بضم الخاء- وهي ما بين القدمين.
وخفافا: جمع خفيفة. وأسد- بإسكان السين- قال في الصحاح: أسد جمعه

³⁵⁶ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām* vol. I, p. 51; al-Damāmīnī, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr, *Tuḥfat al-Gharīb 'alā Mughnī al-Labīb*. Manuscript in Jāmi'at al-Imām, Riadh, no. 106 naḥu. p. 11/a.

³⁵⁷ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 79; al-Damāmīnī, *Tuḥfat al-Gharīb*, p. 17/a.

أُسود, وأُسْد مقصور منه, وأُسْد مخفف.

In the first third of al-Shumunnī's book, we find seven more quotations from al-Damāmīnī, without any reference to the latter. For these quotations al-Damāmīnī himself does not make reference to his use of *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, while al-Shumunnī, for his part, adapts al-Damāmīnī quotations, adding a reference to *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, as follows:³⁵⁸

قوله: (أفي الحق أني مغرم بك هائم) هذا صدر بيت, عزه: وأنت لا خلّ
هواك ولا خمر ويقع في بعض النسخ هذا البيت بتمامه. والمغرم: اسم
مفعول من أغرم فلان بكذا, إذا أولع به ولزمه. والغرام: الشر الدائم
والعذاب, كذا في الصحاح. والهائم: اسم فاعل من هام على وجهه هيماً
وهيماناً ذهب من العشق أو غيره.

The phrase *كذا في الصحاح* does not appear in the text of al-Damāmīnī.³⁵⁹

Looking more closely at al-Shumunnī's dealings with *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, we find that he usually cites the exact words:³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 119.

³⁵⁹ Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuḥfat al-Gharīb*, p. 26/b.

³⁶⁰ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 277; al-Jawharī, Ismā'īl ibn Ḥammād. *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*. 3rd ed. by Aḥmad 'Abd al-Ghafūr 'Aṭṭār. Beirut: Dār al-'ilm li l-Malāyīn, 1984. vol. V. p. 1862;

قوله: (بل بلد ذي صعد وآكام) والصعد- بضم المهملتين:- جمع صعود-
بفتح الصاد المهملة- وهي العقبة. وفي الصحاح: الأكمة, معروفة والجمع
أكم وأكمت, وجمع الأكم آكام مثل جبل وجبال, وجمع الإكام أكم مثل
كتاب وكتب وجمع الأكم آكام مثل عنق وأعناق.

However, some of al-Shumunnī's quotations are not like this. He will sometimes quote a reference without transcribing the exact words, while keeping the meaning. Thus he states:³⁶¹

و(القرائح): جمع قريحة, وهي أول ماء يستنبط من البئر, ثم قيل منه:
لفلان قريحة, أي: استنباط العلم بجودة الطبع. كذا في الصحاح.

while the original text in *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* is:³⁶²

والقريحة: أول ما يستنبط من البئر, ومنه قولهم: لفلان قريحة جيدة, يراد
استنباط العلم بجودة الطبع.

Thus we can see that the phrases which are underlined in the two texts are slightly different. Al-Shumunnī uses: أول ماء (the first water), whilst al-Jawharī uses: أول ما (the first thing). Al-Shumunnī writes: ثم قيل منه, which has the same

³⁶¹ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 5.

³⁶² Al-Jawharī, vol. I, p. 396.

meaning as al-Jawharī's: ومنه قولهم . The word أي , given by al-Shumunnī has the same meaning as the word يراد , given by al-Jawharī. Al-Shumunnī also omits the word جيدة , which is an adjective of قريحة , although this does not affect the meaning.

However, it must be noted that we cannot rule out the possibility that these differences have arisen due to differences between the various manuscripts of *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*.

Before leaving *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, I would like to point out one error made by al-Shumunnī, which is that he says:³⁶³

وضبة هو ابن أدّ عمّ تميم بن مرّة. والفلج: الظفر والفوز, ولم يحك صاحب
الصاح فيه غير سكون اللام.

Thus al-Shumunnī states that al-Jawharī (صاحب الصاح) does not mention anything about الفلج except that it has a vowel-less middle letter (سكون اللام). However this is incorrect, as al-Jawharī also mentions that it can be vocalized (فتح). Thus in *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* he writes:³⁶⁴

والفلج أيضاً: الظفر والفوز, وقد فلج الرجل على خصمه يفلج فلجاً.

and then at the end of the page (7 lines below):

والفلج بالتحريك لغة في الفلج.

³⁶³ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 262.

³⁶⁴ Al-Jawharī, vol. I, p. 335.

It may be that al-Shumunnī did not notice this sentence, or else it may be that, as this citation was mentioned by al-Damāmīnī with the same mistake,³⁶⁵ when al-Shumunnī used him as an authority repeated al-Damāmīnī's error.

The second of the dictionaries that al-Shumunnī depended upon was the *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* of al-Fayrūz'ābādī, who died when al-Shumunnī was seventeen years old. The fact that al-Shumunnī uses this work as a reference means that *al-Qāmūs* was a popular and renowned work by this time, despite the fact that a work would usually require several decades to become acknowledged as authoritative, particularly in a field so important to Arab culture and heritage.

As previously mentioned, al-Shumunnī does not resort to *al-Qāmūs* as often as to *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, the latter being quoted 246 times in total, while the former is only cited 74 times. Looking from the beginning of al-Shumunnī's work up to the particle ف, we find that he quotes 18 times from *al-Qāmūs*, compared with 60 times from *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* (as mentioned above).³⁶⁶ Ten of the 18 quotations from *al-Qāmūs* are given alongside quotations from *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, explaining the same words or phrases. However, there is no mere repetition, as in 9 of these 10 instances *al-Qāmūs* provides additional information to that given in *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuḥfat al-Gharīb*, p. 49/b.

³⁶⁶ See p. 137 above.

³⁶⁷ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Muṣṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 277.

قوله: (بل بلد ذي صعد وأكام) والصعد- بضم المهملتين:- جمع صعود-
بفتح الصاد المهملة- وهي العقبة. وفي الصحاح: الأكمة، معروفة والجمع
أكم وأكمت، وجمع الأكم أكام مثل جبل وجبال، وجمع الإكام أكم مثل
كتاب وكتب وجمع الأكم أكام مثل عنق وأعناق. وفي القاموس: الأكمة:
التل من حجارة واحدة، أو هي دون الجبال، أو الموضع الذي يكون أشد
ارتفاعاً مما حوله، وهو غليظ لا يبلغ أن يكون حجراً.

Thus, on this occasion, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* simply states that الأكمة is: معروفة (well-known), and with providing the plural forms alone, without any explanations; while *al-Qāmūs* gives specific details about meaning. For example, التل من حجارة (a hill composed of one stone); هي دون الجبال (smaller than a mountain), and واحدة (a place which is higher than its surroundings).

Just as al-Shumunnī at times quotes *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* indirectly, i.e. by copying from al-Damāmīnī, he also does so with *al-Qāmūs*. This is clear since the wording of al-Shumunnī is exactly that of al-Damāmīnī, not just for the definitions taken from *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* and *al-Qāmūs*, but for the surrounding discourse as well. Of the 18 quotations from *al-Qāmūs* mentioned by al-Shumunnī (in the first third of the book), 11 are found to have been mentioned by al-Damāmīnī; for some of these 11 the wording is exactly the same for both, for example:³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 54.

قوله: (بني غدانة ما إن أنتم ذهباً... إلخ) غُدانة- بضم المعجمة بعدها
 مهملة وبالنون- حَيّ من يربوع. والصريف- بالمهملة- الفضة الخالصة.
 والخزف قال في الصحاح: هو الجَرّ، وفي القاموس: هو الجرّ وكل ما عُمل
 من طين وشوي بالنار حتى يكون فخاراً.

This entire comment is in al-Damāmīnī in precisely the same words.³⁶⁹

Finally, on one occasion al-Shumunnī misunderstands the text of *al-Qāmūs*. Thus he states:

وفي القاموس: وقوسى كسكرى: موضع ببلاد السراة له يوم، وقوسى-
 بالضم- الموضع البعيد.

Here he makes the meaning of قوسى to be الموضع البعيد (the far place) but the expression in *al-Qāmūs* is:³⁷⁰

والأقوس: المشرف من الرمل، والصعب من الأزمنة، كالأقوس، ككتف،
 والقوسي، بالضم، ومن البلاد: البعيد، ومن الأيام: الطويل.

Here the phrase ومن البلاد: البعيد is clearly referring to الأقوس and not to القوسي , as al-

³⁶⁹ Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, p. 12/a.

³⁷⁰ al-Fayrūz'ābādī, *Majd al-Dīn. al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīt*. Edited by Yūsuf al-Biqā'ī. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995. p. 512.

Shumunnī wrongly supposed.

We shall now proceed to discuss the relationship between al-Shumunnī and al-Damāmīnī with regards to lexicology and etymology. This will be done in three parts and will be based upon the same section of al-Shumunnī's book chosen for our discussion of *al-Ṣiḥāḥ* and *al-Qāmūs*, i.e. from the beginning of the work up to the letter ف.

1. Referring to al-Damāmīnī.

In our selection of his work, al-Shumunnī refers to al-Damāmīnī on 29 occasions, most of which are verbatim. For example:³⁷¹

وفي الشرح: ودوار: صيغة مبالغة من دار يدور, زيدت فيه (الياء) - أيضا-
للمبالغة كقولهم في مبالغة (خارج) و(أحمر): خارجي وأحمري.

However, al-Shumunnī paraphrases al-Damāmīnī's words on four occasions:³⁷²

وفي الشرح: وتخزوني يحتمل الرفع والنصب نحو: ما تأتينا فتحدثنا أي:
ولا أنت مالكي فكيف تسوسني, أو: ليس لك ملك فسياسة, وعلى نصبه
فالفتحة مقدرة وليس ذلك بضرورة. وقد قرئ في الشواذ {إلا أن يعفون أو

³⁷¹ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 35; al-Damāmīnī, *Tuḥfat al-Gharīb*, p. 8/b.

³⁷² Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 294.

يعفو الذي { بإسكان الواو من يعفو.

Here, the original text is:³⁷³

وأشار المصنف إلى تفسير الديان بالمالك وتخزوني بتسوسني، والفعل في كلامه يحتمل الرفع والنصب كما أنه في كلام الشاعر محتمل نحو: ما تأتينا فتحدثنا رفعا ونصبا أي: ولا أنت مالكي فكيف تسوسني، أو: ليس لك ملك فسياسة، وعلى تقدير النصب في البيت فالفتحة مقدرة كما في قوله: وما سودتني عامر عن وراثة...أبا الله أن أسمو بأم ولا أب. وليس ذلك بضرورة. وقد قرئ في الشواذ {إلا أن يعفون أو يعفو الذي بيده عقدة النكاح} بإسكان الواو من يعفو.

2. Quoted from al-Damāmīnī but without naming him as the source.

Al-Shumunnī quotes al-Damāmīnī on 98 instances without indicating him as the source. Some of these quotations are verbatim, as below:³⁷⁴

قوله: (من أهل العالية) في الصحاح: هي ما فوق نجد إلى أرض تهامة وإلى ما وراء مكة، وهي الحجاز وما والاها. والنسبة إليها: عالي. ويقال أيضا: علوي.

³⁷³ Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, p. 70/a.

³⁷⁴ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 51; al-Damāmīnī, *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, p. 11/a.

على غير قياس.

However, in the majority of cases, al-Shumunnī merely gives the meaning of al-Damāmīnī's words. Thus he states:³⁷⁵

قوله: (يا رب يوم لي لا أظله... إلى آخره) أصل (أظله): أظلل فيه, فحذف
الجار توسعاً, و أوصل الضمير بالفعل. وأرمض- بفتح الأول والثالث:- أي
اشتد حراً, مضارع رمض يرمض كعلم يعلم. وأضحى- بفتح الأول والحاء
المهملة:- مضارع ضحي بكسرها, أي: برز للشمس.

while the original text in al-Damāmīnī is:³⁷⁶

أقول: لا أظله: صفة يوم, والأصل: لا أظلل فيه, ثم حذف الجار توسعاً فانصب
الضمير بالفعل على حد قوله: ويوما شهدناه سليماً وعامراً. أي: شهدنا فيه.
وأرمض: فعل مضارع مبني للفاعل من قولهم: رمض اليوم يرمض- بكسر
العين في الماضي وفتحها في المضارع- أي: اشتد حره, فالمعنى على هذا: يشتد
حري من تحت لشدة حرارة الأرض التي أنا فوقها. ومقتضى قول المصنف:
والمعنى أنه تصيبه الرمضاء من تحته, أن يكون (أرمض) مبنيًا للمفعول,
(وأضحى) مضارع مبني للمعلوم أيضاً. أي: أبرز للشمس. وهو بفتح الحاء,
وماضيه: ضحي بكسرها, وضحي بفتحها. وتفسير المصنف له قد يشعر بأنه

³⁷⁵ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 305.

³⁷⁶ Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, p. 75/a.

مبني للمفعول أيضا، ويحتاج إلى تحرير.

3. Al-Shumunnī's use of al-Damāmīnī.

Al-Shumunnī is not content to be a mere passive borrower of al-Damāmīnī's words; rather, he discusses the latter's ideas and seeks to refute or correct him on occasion:³⁷⁷

قوله: (أراني إذا أصبحت... إلى آخره) الهوى- بالقصر- العشق وإرادة النفس. وفي الشرح: وكان الثاني هو المراد بالبيت. يقول أصبح مريد الشيء وأمسى تاركا له متجاوزا عنه، يقال: عدا فلان هذا الأمر، إذا تركه وتجاوز عنه. وأقول: هذا يدل على أن (عاديا) بالعين المهملة وهو مضبوط في بعض نسخ المغني وفي غيره بالمعجمة. وقد أنشد ابن مالك هذا البيت في شرح الكافية: أراني إذا مابت بت على هوى... فثم إذا أصبحت أصبحت عاديا. قال ابن القطاع: غدا إلى كذا، أصبح إليه. ثم قوله: متجاوزا عنه، ليس على ما ينبغي؛ لأن تجاوز عنه، معناه عفا عنه وليس بمراد ههنا.

We can see here that al-Shumunnī criticizes al-Damāmīnī's understanding, and supports his own opinion by referring to Ibn Mālik and Ibn al-Qaṭṭā'.

³⁷⁷ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 242.

3.1.2 Definitions

Al-Shumunnī defines many terms, starting with the very first page of his commentary, where he defines الحمد (praise) in Ibn Hishām's quotation:

الحمدُ: هو الوصفُ بالجميل على جهةِ التَّعْظِيمِ لأجلِ جَمِيلِ اختياريّ (After praising Alla). Al-Shumunnī states:³⁷⁸

الْحَمْدُ: هُوَ الْوَصْفُ بِالْجَمِيلِ عَلَى جِهَةِ التَّعْظِيمِ لِأَجْلِ جَمِيلِ اخْتِيَارِيّ

He does not stop here, but digresses to analyze the definition by discussing the difference between المدح (commendation) and الحمد (praise), quoting in this regard al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍawī.

We can classify his definitions into three types:

1. Simply giving a definition, without going further.

For example, he writes:³⁷⁹

والقواعد: جمع قاعدة، وهي في اللغة: الأساس، صفة غالبية من القعود بمعنى الثبات، أو بمعنى مقابل القيام على سبيل المجاز. وفي العرف هي الأصل والضابط والقانون أمر كلي ينطبق على جزئياته لتعرف أحكامها منه.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 3,4.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 6.

Here he simply gives a definition of القاعدة (what a 'rule' is) without any further discussion.

2. Commenting at length and mentioning any scholarly disagreements.

An example of this is his comments on the word الإعراب³⁸⁰:

والإعراب- في اللغة:- الإفصاح بالشئ. وفي الاصطلاح يقال على النحو، وهو على ما ذكر في شرح اللب: علم بقوانين يعرف بها أحوال التراكيب العربية في الإعراب. وعلى ما ذكر في شرح الألفية لولد مصنفها: علم بأحكام مستنبطة من كلام العرب متعلقة بالكلم في ذواتها وفيما يعرض لها بالتركيب من الكيفية والتقديم والتأخير؛ ليحترز بذلك عن الخطأ في فهم معاني كلامهم وفي الحذو عليه. انتهى. ولا يخفى أن العلم بالأحكام التصريفية غير داخل في التعريف الأول ودخل في التعريف الثاني. ويقال أيضا على تطبيق المركب على تلك الأحكام وبيان أنه من جزئياتها. ويقال أيضا على ما يقابل البناء وهو الأثر الظاهر أو المقدر الذي يجلبه العامل في آخر الاسم أو ما يشبهه، والمراد هنا الأول من المعاني الاصطلاحية، وإضافة العلم إليه إضافة بيانية.

Here he has digressed in his definition by quoting first from the *Sharḥ al-Lubb*, and then from the *Sharḥ al-Alfiyya* by the son of Ibn Mālik (author of the *Alfiyya*). After these quotations he adds his comments.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 5.

3. Correcting his predecessors, especially al-Damāmīnī.

For example:³⁸¹

في الشرح: لم أتحقق إلى الآن الفرق بين التقسيم والتفريق المجرد على وجه
يكونان متباينين حتى إذا وجدنا مدلول التقسيم ثابتاً في محل يسوغ الإتيان بما
شنت من الواو و(أو)، ولكن استعمال الواو أجود، انتهى. وأقول: يمكن أن يقال:
الفرق بينهما أن التقسيم جعل الشيء أقساماً. وذلك يستدعي تقدم ما يتناول الأقسام
سواء كان كلياً نحو: الكلمة اسم وفعل وحرف. أو كلاً نحو: لنا ثنتان، صدور
رماح أو سلاسل. وأما التفريق فهو قطع الاتصال بين شينين أو أكثر، وذلك لا
يستدعي تقدم ما يتناول الأقسام فهو أعم من التقسيم عموماً مطلقاً. وبعبارة
أخرى: التقسيم يقع في كلي المذكورات أو كلها، والتفريق يقع في المذكورات
نفسها.

Here al-Damāmīnī, in his comments on *Mughnī al-Labīb*,³⁸² states that he does not know the difference between التقسيم (classification) and التفريق (differentiation). However, al-Shumunnī sets this right by explaining the difference between the two. He states that التقسيم is dividing something into parts, which requires the prior existence of that which has parts; while التفريق is removing the connection between two or more things, and hence it does not require the prior

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 141.

³⁸² Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, p. 31/b.

existence of that which has parts, and thus it is absolutely more general than التقسيم.

So far the discussion has been about the interpretation of Ibn Hishām's text. However, sometimes we find that al-Shumunnī defines an utterance which he himself has mentioned in his commentary. For example:³⁸³

قوله: (ومنه: لقيت بزيد الأسد، أي: بسبب لقائي إياه) هذه هي الباء التجريدية.
والتجريد أن ينتزع من ذي صفة آخر مثله مبالغة في كمال تلك الصفة فيه.

The word التجريد (divestment) that he explains and defines is not Ibn Hishām's; yet he includes it within his comments on Ibn Hishām's text. He then realizes that it needs explanation and definition.

3.1.3 Rhetoric

Before discussing this point we would like to briefly refer to the three branches of Arabic rhetoric, and then we will look at al-Shumunnī's work in the light of these three branches. These are:

³⁸³ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 216.

- *‘Ilm al-Ma‘ānī* [semantics]: this branch is concerned with the grammatical structure of the sentence, coordinating conjunctions, additions and omissions (substantive and concealed), etc.
- *‘Ilm al-Bayān* [rhetoric]: this branch is concerned with the usage of imagination and figuration, and discusses such aspects as simile, metaphor, and metonymy.
- *‘Ilm al-Badī‘* [figurative speech]: this is the art of using figures of speech. It includes assonance, contrast, paronomasia, etc.

Al-Shumunnī makes use of his knowledge of this field throughout his commentary. Semantics, for example, has been used in clarifying certain quotations from Ibn Hishām's text. This can be seen, for instance, in his comments regarding Ibn Hishām's saying:

فدونك كتابا تشد الرحال فيما دونه

Thus al-Shumunnī writes:³⁸⁴

فإن قلت: فما فائدة وضع الظاهر هنا موضع المضمرة على هذا التقدير؟ قلت:
التوصل إلى التنكير الدال على التعظيم.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 8.

Using a substantive in place of a pronoun in this context is part of *'ilm al-ma 'ānī*.

With regard to *'ilm al-bayān*, we find that al-Shumunnī uses it extensively in his book. He sometimes digresses in his quotations and at other times he abridges. An example of one of his digressions is found in the introduction, where he comments on Ibn Hishām's saying:

الهادي إلى صوب الصواب.

Al-Shumunnī explains a metaphor with a metonymy, after saying that this clause contains this type of rhetoric. He then digresses for twenty-seven lines to expatiate on this theme as if his commentary was about rhetoric rather than grammar.³⁸⁵

An example of one of his abridged comments is his saying:³⁸⁶

قوله: (ثم قالوا تحبها... إلخ) قبل هذا البيت: أبرزوها بين المها تتهادى... بين
خمس كواعب أتراب. والمها: بقر الوحش, استعير هنا للنساء مبالغة في تشبيهه
عيونهن بعيونها.

Here he makes a passing remark, during his explanation of a verse of poetry, that *المها* is used metaphorically for women for the purpose of intensifying the simile.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 5,6.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 26.

As for 'ilm al-badī', we shall take as an example al-Shumunnī's statement:³⁸⁷

قوله: (على حد قوله: ولا عيب فيهم... إلخ) فلول السيف: كسور في حده
والكتائب- بالمتناة الفوقية-: جمع كنيبة، وهي الجيش وقراعتها: مضاربتها. وأراد
ابن مالك وغيره بكون هذا الحديث على حد البيت كونه مشتملا على ما اشتمل
عليه من تأكيد المدح بما يشبه الذم، وإن كان الذى منه في الحديث من نوع، وفي
البيت من آخر؛ وذلك أن البديعيين قسموه إلى ضربين، الأول نحو البيت، وهو
أن يستثنى من صفة ذم منفية صفة مدح بتقدير دخولها في صفة الذم، فمعنى
البيت: لا عيب فيهم إلا فلول سيوفهم إن كان ذلك عيبا، ولا شك أن هذا التقدير
محال؛ لأن فل السيف كناية عن كمال الشجاعة، فالتأكيد في هذا الضرب من
وجهين، الأول: أنه كدعوى الشئ ببينة، وأنت عقلت نقيض المطلوب، وهو إثبات
شئ من العيب بالمحال، والمعلق بالمحال محال. والثاني: أن الأصل في
الاستثناء الاتصال، فذكر أداة الاستثناء مثل ذكر ما بعدها يوقع في وهم السامع
أن غرض المتكلم إخراج شئ مما نفاه وجعله ثابتا، فإذا ولي الأداة صفة مدح
وتحول الاستثناء من الانفصال إلى الانقطاع جاء التأكيد لما فيه من المدح على
المدح، والإشعار بأنه لم يجد فيه صفة ذم حتى ينفىها، فاضطر إلى استثناء صفة
مدح. والضرب الثاني: نحو الحديث، وهو أن يثبت لشئ صفة المدح وتأتي
عقبها بأداة استثناء يليها صفة مدح أخرى، ولا يفيد هذا الضرب التأكيد إلا من
الوجه الثاني، وهو أن الأصل في الاستثناء الاتصال، فقبل ذكر ما بعد أداته يقع
في وهم السامع إخراج شئ مما قبلها، فإذا ذكر بعد الأداة صفة مدح أخرى جاء

³⁸⁷ Ibid., vol. I, p. 238.

التأكيد. ولا يتأتى في هذا الضرب التأكيد من الوجه الأول أعني دعوى الشئ
 ببيئة؛ لأنه مبني على التعليق بالمحال المبني على تقدير الاستثناء متصلاً. وهذا
 التقدير في الضرب الأول دون الثاني.

In this relatively long excerpt, al-Shumunnī touches on an area of '*ilm al-badī*', namely, تأكيد المدح بما يشبه الذم (intensifying praise by using that which resembles censure). Having explained the line of poetry and stating that it is an example of the technique of 'intensifying praise by using that which resembles censure', al-Shumunnī digresses further by explaining the term and how it has been divided into two sub-types, giving examples for each.

3.1.4 Biographical Notices

Al-Shumunnī's book contains seventy-one biographical notices, of which sixty-six of the names are mentioned in *Mughnī al-Labīb*. This is a great deal considering that he is a grammarian and not a historian or biographer.

If we refer to *Mughnī al-Labīb*, we find that it contains three hundred and thirty authorities. Thus al-Shumunnī is selective in his choice of the individuals for whom he has written biographies, selecting around one fifth of the total number of authorities mentioned in *Mughnī al-Labīb*. The question then arises as to whether there is a particular reason why al-Shumunnī confines his biographies to this number, and as to whether he follows a particular methodology in dealing with

these biographies.

Al-Shumunnī himself has mentioned nothing in this regard. However, we will attempt to analyze the biographical sketches, in order to answer these two questions.

Six of al-Shumunnī's biographical sketches are for individuals not mentioned in the text of *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Yet, al-Shumunnī brings them forward either by way of introduction, as in the case of the biography of Ibn Hishām; or by way of digression, as in the case of the biographies of al-Akhfash al-Akbar and al-Akhfash al-Aṣghar, which arise in the course of his biography of al-Akhfash al-Awsaṭ; or by way of introducing one of those poets whose poetry is quoted by Ibn Hishām without mentioning its author—of these there are three: 'Ātika, Abū Mihjan and Abū Ḥayya al-Numayrī.

The remaining sixty-five biographies are mentioned in the text of *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Six of these are mentioned as part of poetical texts quoted by Ibn Hishām, while the remaining fifty-nine are mentioned within Ibn Hishām's text itself.

We can then classify the biographical notices as follows:

39 biographies of grammarians.

13 biographies of poets.

3 biographies of Qur'ān exegetes.

6 biographies of linguists and men of letters.

2 biographies of princes.

1 biography of a Ḥadīth narrator.

1 biography of a jurist.

1 biography of a writer on rhetoric.

5 general biographies.

After considerable study, it is not clear why al-Shumunnī confined himself to these biographies to the exclusion of others. Another point of note is that al-Shumunnī does not strictly adhere to writing a biography when an authority is first mentioned in *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Sometimes he will do so—as with Makkī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ibn al-Ḥājib, and al-Rāzī—while on other occasions he does not—as is the case with Sībawayh, the foremost of the grammarians, about whom he writes after his being mentioned for the thirty-third time in *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Likewise, al-Zamakhsharī has a biographical notice after the seventh time of being mentioned. There is no apparent explanation for this.

If we look at the biographies to see how al-Shumunnī tackles them, we notice that he does not follow any specific methodology. With some biographies he digresses, as in the case of Ibn Jinnī, where he states the following:³⁸⁸

قوله: (ذكره ابن جني) هو أبو الفتح عثمان بن جني الموصلي النحوي, قرأ على

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 141.

أبي علي الفارسي، وكان أبوه جني مملوكاً رومياً لسليمان بن فهد الأزدي، وقرأ ديوان المتنبي على صاحبه وشرحه، وكان قعد أول أمره للإقراء بالموصل، فاجتاز عليه أبو علي وهو في حلقة فقال له: تزبيت وأنت حصرم، وفترك الحلقة ولازمه حتى تمهر. وكانت ولادته بالموصل قبل الثلاثين والثلاثمائة، ووفاته في صفر سنة اثنتين وتسعين وثلاثمائة. قال ابن خلكان: وجني- بكسر الجيم وتشديد النون بعدها ياء، انتهى. وفي الشرح في غير هذا الموضع: هو بإسكان الياء، وليس منسوباً، وإنما هو معرب (كني)، كذا في شرح المفصل للإسفنداري.

The same applies to the biographies of al-Mutanabbī and Abū Mihjan, to whom he devotes twelve and fifteen lines respectively.³⁸⁹

Other biographies are very short, such as that of al-Farazdaq, for example.³⁹⁰

والفرزدق لقب همام بن غالب بن صعصعة الشاعر المشهور

Here he contents himself with simply mentioning his name and the fact he was a well-known poet. The same is true of the biographical notice of the grammarian Mabramān, for whom he states:³⁹¹

قوله: (ومبرمان) هو بفتح الميم وإسكان الموحدة وفتح الراء: لقب، واسمه

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 26, 64.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 65.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 309.

أبو بكر والله تعالى أعلم.

Here he contents himself with just the vocalization of the title, and with stating the name of the authority. Similarly:³⁹²

قوله: (ابن الباذش) هو بالباء الموحدة والذال المعجمة المكسورة والشين المعجمة، من نحاة المغرب.

In this case he concerns himself with vocalizing the name and stating that the authority was a Moroccan grammarian.

However, the majority of al-Shumunnī's biographies are approximately five lines in length, an example being that of al-'Ukbarī, where he says:³⁹³

وأبو البقاء هو عبد الله ابن أبي عبد الله الحسين بن أبي البقاء العكبري الأصل،
البغدادي المولد والدار، الفقيه الحنبلي النحوي الفرضي الضرير، أخذ النحو عن
ابن الخشاب وغيره، وُلد سنة ثمان وثلاثين وخمسمائة، وتوفي سنة ست/ عشرة
وستمئة ببغداد. والعكبري- بضم المهملة وفتح الموحدة- نسبة إلى (عكبرا) بليدة
على دجلة فوق بغداد بعشرة فراسخ.

Here we notice that he gives al-'Ukbarī's name, the place of his origin, his place of

³⁹² *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 313.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 207.

birth and upbringing, his jurisprudential school and the fact that al-‘Ukbarī was blind. Then he mentions his teachers, followed by the dates of his births and deaths, and finally he gives the derivation of al-‘Ukbarī’s name.

Al-Shumunnī does not usually state the sources of his biographical notices. For seventy-one biographies he only mentions his source on nineteen occasions. Of these, he refers to the *Wafayāt al-A’yān* of Ibn Khallikān for five biographies: al-Shalawbīnī,³⁹⁴ Ibn Bābīshādh,³⁹⁵ al-Suhaylī,³⁹⁶ al-Sakhāwī,³⁹⁷ and Ibn Jinnī.³⁹⁸ He refers to *Sharḥ al-Damāmīnī* for four biographies: ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān,³⁹⁹ Ibn Jinnī,⁴⁰⁰ Surāqa ibn Mālik,⁴⁰¹ and ‘Isā ibn ‘Umar.⁴⁰² He also refers to *Inbā al-Ruwā* by al-Qifṭī for the biographies of al-Jawharī⁴⁰³ and Abū Tammām.⁴⁰⁴

As for the rest, he references each once, as follows: He refers to Ibn Ayyūb for the notice on al-Mutanabbī,⁴⁰⁵ *al-Mujālasa* by al-Daynawarī for the biography of Abū Mihjan al-Thaqafī,⁴⁰⁶ *al-Bayān wa l-Tabyīn* by al-Jāḥiẓ for Abū ‘Ubayda’s biography,⁴⁰⁷ *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* by al-Dhahabī for Sībawayh’s biography,⁴⁰⁸

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 41.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 45.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 86.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 113.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 141.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 42.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 141.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 35.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 79.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 237.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 207.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 26.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 64.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 129.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 192.

Mu'jam al-'Udabā' for al-Jawharī's biography,⁴⁰⁹ *al-Rawḍ al-Unuf* by al-Suhaylī for the biography of Qutayla bint al-Naḍr,⁴¹⁰ *Tārīkh Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asākir for the biography of 'Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib,⁴¹¹ and *al-Aghānī* for the biography of Kuthayyir 'Azza.⁴¹² Also, he refers to his father's memoirs for the biography of Ibn al-Ḍāī'.⁴¹³

We can see the great diversity of his references. Some of them are biographical references, such as *Wafayāt al-A'yān* by Ibn Khallikān, *Inbā al-Ruwā* by al-Qifṭī, and *Mu'jam al-Udabā'* by Yāqūt; some are literary works, such as *al-Aghānī* and *al-Bayān wa l-Tabyīn* by al-Jāḥiẓ; some are historical works, such as *Tārīkh Dimashq* by Ibn 'Asākir; and others are biographies of the Prophet Muhammad, such as *al-Rawḍ al-Unuf* by al-Suhaylī.

It appears that al-Shumunnī erred in the biography of one of his authorities, namely Ibn Barhān, whom he confuses with Ibn al-Dahhān. Thus he writes a notice for Ibn al-Dahhān as if he were Ibn Barhān, saying:⁴¹⁴

قوله: (وابن برهان) هو بفتح الموحدة ومنع الصرف, أبو محمد سعيد بن
المبارك بن علي البغدادي, سيبويه عصره, ولد سنة أربع وتسعين وأربعمائة,
وتوفي سنة تسع وستين وخمسمائة .

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 237.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 59.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 102.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 136.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 155.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 139. See for Ibn Barhn, the Arabic text, p.117

However, this is the biography of Ibn al-Dahhān, whereas Ibn Barhān is ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn ‘Alī ibn Barhān al-Asadī al-‘Ukbarī al-Baghdādī; an authority on literature, grammar, and jurisprudence, who died in 456/1064.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that in addition to the above, al-Shumunnī wrote biographies for a Shi‘ite sect called the Kaysāniyya;⁴¹⁵ he wrote biographies for the well known Barāmika family of the Abbasid era;⁴¹⁶ and he also wrote a biography for the notables of the city of Damascus,⁴¹⁷ and those of the Sūq ‘Ukāz.⁴¹⁸

3.1.5 Theological issues

The theological interests of al-Shumunnī can also be seen in his commentary on *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Thus we find him interposing certain philosophical and theological allusions into his comments on Ibn Hishām’s text. Starting with his comments in the introduction, he chooses certain words that carry theological significance, and makes his commentary on these words from a theological perspective. He does so despite the fact that in *Mughnī al-Labīb* these words do not have any theological significance, rather being employed in their everyday

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 93.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 189.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 51.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 247.

usage. Thus for example he states:⁴¹⁹

قوله: (الهادي إلى صوب الصواب) الهداية عند أهل السنة على ما اشتهر في
النقل عنهم هي: الدلالة على طريق توصل إلى المطلوب, سواء حصل الوصول
والإهداء أم لم يحصل. وعند المعتزلة: الدلالة الموصلة إلى المطلوب.

The word الهداية, which al-Shumunnī explains in his commentary on the word الهادي in *Mughnī al-Labīb*, has no theological significance in its original context. However, al-Shumunnī proceeds to explain the theological dispute regarding this word between the ‘orthodox’ Ahl al-Sunna and the rationalist Mu‘tazila.

Similarly, when al-Shumunnī comments upon Ibn Hishām’s phrase, also found in the introduction: إذ كان الوضع في هذا الغرض, he begins by commenting on the word الغرض and explaining the difference between الفائدة (benefit) and الغاية (goal). Then he comments theologically upon الغرض (goal) by saying that it is a teleological cause and that it does not play a role in Alla’s acts.

In the body of the book we will find that al-Shumunnī interweaves passing remarks in his commentary that indicate his interest in scholastic theology. We also find some relatively lengthy comments and digressions into theological matters. Some of his theological statements can be seen in the following

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 5.

paragraph:⁴²⁰

قوله: (الثالث: الاستعانة) أدرج ابن مالك في التسهيل باء الاستعانة في باء السببية, وقال في شرحه: باء السببية هي الداخلة على صالح للاستغناء به عن فاعل معداها مجازاً نحو: {فأخرج به من الثمرات} فلو قصد إسناد الإخراج إلى الهاء لحسن, ولكنه مجاز, قال: ومنه: كتبت بالقلم وقطع بالسكين, فإنه يقال: كتبت القلم وقطعت السكين, والنحويون يعبرون عن هذه الباء بالاستعانة, وآثر على ذلك التعبير بالسببية من أجل الأفعال المنسوبة إلى الله تعالى؛ فإن استعمال السببية فيها تجوز, واستعمال الاستعانة فيها لا يجوز.

If we look carefully at this text we find that al-Shumunnī quotes the word الاستعانة from *Mughnī al-Labīb*, where it appears in Ibn Hishām's discussion of the types of the letter ب. Al-Shumunnī then explains that Ibn Mālik in his commentary on *al-Tashīl* includes the باء السببية within the باء الاستعانة for a theological reason; this being that with verbs attributed to Alla the Almighty, it is acceptable to use السببية but not الاستعانة.

This is similar to his comment on a particular Qur'anic verse in *Mughni al-Labib*:⁴²¹

قوله: ({ويوم تشقق السماء بالغمام}) قيل: هو الغمام المذكور في قوله

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 215.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 219.

تعالى {هل ينظرون إلا أن يأتيهم الله} أي: أمره وبأسه في ظل من الغمام.

In his interpretation of this verse al-Shumunnī refers, through his interpreting the phrase *يأتيهم الله* by *بأسه وبأمره*, to a particular theological issue, one which is a dispute in scholastic theology between constructionists (المؤولن) and non-constructionists.

We shall now proceed to look at the second type of theological digression. This relates to certain sections of *Mughnī al-Labīb*, which require some degree of theological expatiation as the text itself has theological significance. Al-Shumunnī then provides relatively lengthy passages commenting upon these. An example of this is the following:⁴²²

قوله: (لأن قسم الله قديم) هذا تعليل لقوله (لا إخبار). ولقائل أن يقول: إن أراد القسم اللفظي، فقد تقرر في علم الكلام أن الكلام اللفظي المؤلف من الحروف الملفوطة المسموعة ليس بقديم. ومعنى إضافته إلى الله تعالى أنه مخلوق له تعالى ليس من تأليفات المخلوقين، وإن أراد النفسي، فقد تقرر أيضاً أن الكلام النفسي صفة واحدة في الأزل ليست بمنقسمة فيه إلى أقسام الكلام التي هي الخبر والأمر والنهي والقسم وغير ذلك، وإنما ينقسم إليها عند حدوث المتعلقات. نعم ذهب الكرامية وبعض الحنابلة إلى أن كلامه تعالى من جنس الحروف والأصوات المترتبة المسموعة، وهو مع ذلك قديم. وذهب العضد في كتابه المواقف- وقد سبقه إلى ذلك محمد الشهرستاني في كتابه نهاية الإقدام- إلى أن

⁴²² *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 202.

المعنى في قول الأشعري وغيره: (كلام الله معنى قديم), ليس في مقابلة اللفظ حتى يراد به مدلول اللفظ ومفهومه, بل في مقابلة المعنى, والمراد به ما لا يقوم بذاته كسائر الصفات, لا كما زعمت الكرامية من قدم النظم المرتب الأجزاء, فإنه بديهي الاستحالة, بل بمعنى أن اللفظ القائم بالنفس ليس بمرتب كالقائم بنفس الحافظ من غير ترتيب الأجزاء. والترتب إنما يحصل في التلطف لاحتياجه إلى الآلة. أما القائم بذاته تعالى فلا ترتيب في حتى أن من سمع كلامه تعالى سمعه غير مرتب الأجزاء؛ لعدم احتياجه إلى الآلات. قال التفنيزاني في بحث الاستثناء في حاشية العضد: وفيه نظر؛ لأننا لا نعقل قيام اللفظ بذاته تعالى سواء كان مرتب الأجزاء أو غير مرتبها, انتهى. ويمكن على قول الجمهور من أهل الحق أن يقال في جواب التردد السابق: نختار أنه أراد القسم اللفظي, لكن أراد بالقديم ما ليس بآت, لا مالا أول لوجوده بقرينة ذكره في رد القول بأن (اقسم) إخبار عن قسم يأتي. أو نختار أنه أراد القسم النفسي, وهو قديم في حد ذاته, ومع قطع النظر عن صيرورته قسماً عند حدوث التعلق.

Clearly, this text discusses one of the most complicated theological issues, namely that of the speech of Alla (كلام الله), from which the very science of theology (علم الكلام) is said to have taken its name.⁴²³ It is also the cause of the infamous and violent debates that occurred in the 3rd Islamic century over the question of the created or uncreated nature of the Qur'ān. It is noticeable that al-Shumunnī expands his commentary on this issue by differentiating between

⁴²³ See al-Ījī, 'Aḥud al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad. *al-Mawāqif fī 'ilm al-Kalām*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Mutanabbī, n.d. pp. 8,9.

internal psychological speech (i.e. thought) and verbal speech. Then he talks about the disagreement between the majority (الجمهور) , the Ḥanbalīs, and the karrāmiyya about the issue of Alla the Almighty's pre-existent attribute of Speech. Afterwards, he mentions the opinions of famous scholars who dealt with this issue, such as al-Shahrastānī and al-Taftāzānī.

Before concluding, I would like to point out that al-Shumunnī is not keen to reveal his references when tackling theological issues. However, there are some indications to certain of these references, as shown by the previous quotation, where he refers to the *al-Mawāqif* of al-‘Aḍud al-Ījī and the *Nihāyat al-Iqdām* of al-Shahrastānī, as well as to the commentary of al-Taftāzānī on al-‘Aḍud. There are also some allusions to al-Rāzī and al-Zamakhsharī.

3.2 Al-Shumunnī's Opinion of Ibn Hishām's Views

We have already mentioned, when discussing al-Shumunnī's purpose in writing his commentary, that he was seeking to judge fairly between Ibn Hishām and his critics: Ibn al-Ṣā'igh in his unfinished *Tanzīh al-Salaf 'an Tamwīh al-Khalaf*; and al-Damāmīnī in his *Tuḥfat al-Gharīb*, and also in his comments upon *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Hence, it can be seen that, when writing his explanation of *Mughnī al-Labīb*, al-Shumunnī directed his attention primarily to these commentaries, with most of his comments being linked to the remarks of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and al-

Damāmīnī.

In light of the above, and following a close study of al-Shumunnī's work, I have concluded that it is possible to classify al-Shumunnī's opinions regarding Ibn Hishām into three categories:

- Agreement and support.
- Opposition and criticism.
- Defence of Ibn Hishām, and rebuttal of al-Ṣā'igh and al-Damāmīnī.

3.2.1 Agreement and Support

One finds that the majority of al-Shumunnī's work is in agreement with Ibn Hishām's views, and is in support of the opinions given by him concerning the first category, except in a relatively small number of instances.

In this category I have not included those points on which al-Shumunnī defends Ibn Hishām against his two critics, as we have treated these separately in the third category. Rather, what I mean when speaking of al-Shumunnī's agreement and support of Ibn Hishām is merely al-Shumunnī's endeavour to comment upon Ibn Hishām's work so as to clarify it and does not include al-Shumunnī's defence of Ibn Hishām against his critics. It is clear at once to the reader that al-Shumunnī was appreciative of Ibn Hishām's efforts and largely in agreement with his treatment of the subject. Lastly, we include here those commentaries that we mentioned above when discussing al-Shumunnī's

methodology.

3.2.2 Opposition and criticism

Moving to the second category, this is without doubt considerably smaller than the other two categories. One notices that al-Shumunnī's criticisms of Ibn Hishām are of different types. Thus, al-Shumunnī might disagree with Ibn Hishām on a point of grammar, as his comments regarding Ibn Hishām's opinion about the moving forward of the *hamza* (*taqdīm al-hamza*) when it occurs in a coupled sentence (*jumla ma'tūfa*) containing a conjunction (*harf al-'atf*).

Having stated that there is common consent that the *hamza* must come at the start of the interrogative sentence; Ibn Hishām mentioned the difference of opinion about how the sentence should be grammatically assessed. Ibn Hishām supported the opinion that holds that the *hamza* moves in front of the conjunction, even though in principle it should follow it (e.g. أولم تكتب, which would originally be ألم تكتب); and he considered weak the opposing opinion which holds that the *hamza* does not move in front of the conjunction, but rather is in its original position, and that instead it is followed by an implied phrase (*jumla muqaddara*)—such that the previous example might read:

أ نسيت ولم تكتب

Ibn Hishām argued that the second opinion is weak because it requires the

implication of an omitted sentence, while the first merely required that the *hamza* be brought before the conjunction.

Al-Shumunnī's gave a comment upon this, from which can be understood his opposition to this opinion of Ibn Hishām; thus he indicates that elision (*ḥadhf*) occurs frequently in the language of the Arabs, whilst moving words forward (*taqdīm*) in such cases as this is rare, except in poetry.⁴²⁴

Another type of criticism is found when al-Shumunnī corrects Ibn Hishām for being too quick in attributing opinions to grammarians without sufficient investigation. For example:

Al-Shumunnī opposed Ibn Hishām when he stated (in the chapter regarding *ال*) that grammarians required that the explicative apposition (*'atf al-bayān*) should be better known than its antecedent (*ma 'tūf 'alayh*) as it is meant to clarify the antecedent. Al-Shumunnī asserts that this condition is not accepted, and that the famous Sībawayh himself stated to the contrary. He furthermore cites al-Taftāzānī as saying that this is not necessary for the *'atf al-bayān*.⁴²⁵

Sometimes al-Shumunnī criticizes Ibn Hishām for the use of his wording,

⁴²⁴ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 31.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 110.

opposing him, for example, for using an expression that is incorrect with regard to its linguistic construction.

An example of this is found in the chapter regarding أن, where Ibn Hishām explained the Qur’ānic verse:

{قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ}

as meaning:

ما أوحى إليّ في أمر الربوبية إلا التوحيد لا الإشراك.

Al-Shumunnī opposed Ibn Hishām for using the word لا after the *exceptive* phrase (*jumlat al-istithnā’*) beginning with لا. Despite the fact that al-Shumunnī mentions that al-Ṭibī allowed this word formation, he himself did not approve of it. He also related from al-Taftāzānī that such a construction is sometimes found, although not in generally cited rhetorical sources.⁴²⁶

Sometimes al-Shumunnī adds to Ibn Hishām by attributing grammatical opinions to their original sources. For example, we might find that Ibn Hishām

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 85.

cites a grammatical problem and answers it without mentioning the source of the original idea. Al-Shumunnī then comments on the problem and indicates the source of the problem and its solution.

An example of this is found in the chapter regarding the particle أم (meaning ‘or’), where Ibn Hishām speaks about the case when it is preceded by the *hamza* of interrogation (*hamzat al-istifhām*), which requires an answer [as with “Is it A or B?”]. In such a case, it is not permitted to answer with merely نعم (yes) or لا (no), rather one of the two options [A or B] must be stated. In this regard, Ibn Hishām cites verses seemingly at variance with this grammatical rule:

تقول عجوز مدرجي متروحا على بابها من عند أهلي وغاديا
أذوزوجة بالمصر أم ذو خصومة أراك لها بالبصرة العام ثاويا
فقلت لها: لا , إن أهلي جيرة لأكتبة الدهنا جميعا وماليا

Thus the first hemistich of the second verse contains أم preceded by the *hamzat al-istifhām*; yet in spite of this, the answer in the following verse is given with لا. This is apparently in opposition to the stated grammatical rule. Ibn Hishām answers this by saying that the word لا is not an answer to the question, but a response to what the woman had imagined about the occurrence of one of these two matters, i.e. that he either had a wife or a dispute. Hence, the poet was not merely satisfied with saying لا, but completed his response afterwards.

What interests us here is that al-Shumunnī added to Ibn Hishām's words regarding this ingenious explanation and clarified that this problem and its solution are not the work of Ibn Hishām, but of Ibn 'Uṣfūr, in his book, *Sharḥ al-Jumal*.⁴²⁷

Sometimes we find al-Shumunnī opposing Ibn Hishām in referring certain opinions to one of the earlier authors. An example of this is found in the chapter regarding لا, when Ibn Hishām attributed an opinion to Ibn Mālik. The opinion which Ibn Hishām attributes to Ibn Mālik to some degree detracts from Ibn Mālik and his scholarly status. Thus, Ibn Hishām mentions—with astonishment—that Ibn Mālik in his book *Sharḥ al-Tashīl*, while enumerating the categories of لا, adds the word in the following Qur'ānic verse:

{إِلا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ}

although this is not لا which is a single word, but is rather composed of two words: إن and لا.

Al-Shumunnī opposes Ibn Hishām for attributing this to Ibn Mālik, and disproved what he had stated by citing the words of Ibn Mālik from his *Sharḥ al-*

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 91.

Tashīl. Thus he shows that this was an error by Ibn Hishām, and not the result of ignorance or an error on the part of Ibn Mālik.⁴²⁸

In a similar way, al-Shumunnī opposes Ibn Hishām for attributing an error to Ibn al-Ḥājib in the following example:

In the chapter regarding *إن* *al-mukhaffafa* (the lightened *In*), al-Shumunnī opposes Ibn Hishām for relating from Ibn al-Ḥājib that this *إن* may be augmentative (*zā'id*) after the word *لما*. Ibn Hishām then describes this as a mistake on the part of Ibn al-Ḥājib. Al-Shumunnī opposes Ibn Hishām here, stating that this is not a mistake by Ibn al-Ḥājib, but a form found in one particular dialect, confirming his opinion by the fact that al-Raḍī also stated this.⁴²⁹

As mentioned previously, al-Shumunnī was in general extremely positive towards Ibn Hishām during his study of the latter's book. The same is found with regard to those points where al-Shumunnī differs with, or corrects Ibn Hishām. One does not find anything by way of insult, or even anger on the part of al-Shumunnī in his treatment of Ibn Hishām's work.

3.2.3 Defense of Ibn Hishām

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and al-Damāmīnī's criticisms of Ibn Hishām varied, some being

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 159.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 55.

merely superficial, some being related to Ibn Hishām's style, and some to the information given by Ibn Hishām. From certain criticisms it is possible to infer that there is a certain degree of unfairness towards Ibn Hishām on the part of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and al-Damāmīnī, to a point that they sometimes find themselves in certain predicaments, in which scholars of their caliber ought not to fall. This can be seen from the following examples, which we have chosen to give an idea about these criticisms and the defense against them given by al-Shumunnī.

The first thing with which al-Damāmīnī opens his criticism of Ibn Hishām is on a superficial matter, regarding the statement of Ibn Hishām in the introduction of his book, where he writes: *بل كقطرة من قطرات بحر* (Indeed, like a drop from the drops of the ocean).

Al-Damāmīnī criticized Ibn Hishām for his use of the word *قطرات* (drops), stating that this plural form of the word is a plural of paucity (*jam' qilla*), which is best not used in this situation. This, he believes, is even more so the case since it is an indefinite noun; thus it would have been better for Ibn Hishām to have said: *كقطرة في بحر*.⁴³⁰

Here al-Shumunnī begins his first defense of Ibn Hishām, replying to al-Damāmīnī that there is another consideration, this being the aesthetic side of the sentence or the context. The sentence is in a rhetorical context, and since Ibn Hishām paid great attention to writing in rhymed prose, the word *قطرات* is the more appropriate in this regard. The preceding sentence of Ibn Hishām's introduction

⁴³⁰ Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, p. 2/b.

was: كَشْدَرَةٌ مِنْ عَقْدٍ نَحْرٍ, and it is considered preferable by the scholars of rhetoric that the two lines of rhymed prose should be of equal length, or that the second should be slightly longer; and this is what was done by Ibn Hishām.⁴³¹

Another of al-Damāmīnī's criticisms of Ibn Hishām in the introduction, is found when—in his view—Ibn Hishām confuses between inflection (*i'rāb*) and indeclension (*binā'*). This is because Ibn Hishām, while discussing the reasons for the excessive length of works on syntax, numbered amongst them the very finely detailed analysis of seemingly obvious syntactical features pertaining to inflection, such as the *mubtada'* and its *khavar*, the *fā'il* and its *nā'ib*, the *jārr* and the *majrūr*, and the *'āṭif* and the *ma'tūf*.

Al-Damāmīnī criticizes Ibn Hishām for mentioning the *'āṭif* (conjunction) at this point, saying that the *'āṭif* is indeclinable and not inflective, so Ibn Hishām should not have mentioned it when speaking about words that inflect—as it has no inflection.⁴³²

Al-Shumunnī does not neglect to defend Ibn Hishām at this point. He thus asserts that al-Damāmīnī has made an error in thinking that the discussion is about declinable and uninflected parts of speech; rather it is about inflection itself and grammatical construction, regardless of the inflection or not of individual words. Then he draws attention to the word *jārr* (preposition), which also appears in these

⁴³¹ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 9.

⁴³² Al-Damāmīnī, *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, p. 4/b.

words of Ibn Hishām, and which is also uninflected. If it was as al-Damāmīnī imagined, it would have also been included in his criticism, and not just the conjunction.⁴³³

It is strange that al-Damāmīnī, as a leading scholar in the field, has not noticed the clear import of Ibn Hishām's words and has made a simple error in understanding.

Sometimes Ibn Hishām is criticized for the wording of his sentences. For instance, Ibn Hishām may list a number of examples to illustrate his point but will often neglect to use the conjunctive particle. Thus he states:

(فيقولون التقدير في {أفلم يسيرا} , {أفمنضرب عنكم الذكر} , {أفمن مات أو قتل
انقلبتم} , {أفما نحن بميتين})

It is noticeable that Ibn Hishām listed these examples without joining them with conjunctions. For this he was criticized by al-Damāmīnī, since, grammatically, it is not permitted to leave out the conjunction.

Al-Shumunnī defends Ibn Hishām in this regard saying that this is acceptable if the intention is merely to give a list; just as an accountant might dictate to a clerk by saying: “house, book, horse”, without the use of a

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 16.

conjunction.⁴³⁴

There is, however, a degree of weakness in al-Shumunnī's defense of Ibn Hishām on this occasion because Ibn Hishām's book is a work of scholarship and of grammar, and from the scholarly perspective al-Damāmīnī is correct to point out that it is not allowed to leave out the conjunction. In addition, the evidence given by al-Shumunnī is not valid in this regard, because commercial usage is not an acceptable standard in matters of grammatical issues, as evidenced by the fact that commercial usage is not recorded in the corpus of Arabic linguistic works as a support for grammatical rulings.

Moving to an example of Ibn al-Šā'igh's criticisms of Ibn Hishām, we find that, when discussing the particle *أَلْ* *al-nāṣiba* that governs the subjunctive, Ibn Hishām states that if *أَلْ* is followed by a present tense verb (*fi'l muḍāri'*) preceded by *لَا*, the present tense verb may take the indicative (*raf'*), subjunctive (*naṣb*), or jussive (*jazm*) case; and if it is not preceded by *لَا*, it cannot take the jussive case.

Ibn al-Šā'igh sarcastically comments upon these words of Ibn Hishām, saying:

How can he claim that the jussive is not allowed after *أَلْ*, when he himself—i.e. Ibn Hishām—not long ago narrated from the scholars of Kūfa and from Abū 'Ubayda that they allowed the jussive in this case.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 30.

Al-Shumunnī comes to the defense of Ibn Hishām, and expresses his astonishment at Ibn al-Ṣā'igh. He states that Ibn Hishām has chosen the generally accepted opinion, that أن does not put a verb in the jussive case, and does not claim that there is unanimity that the jussive is not allowed with it, so as not to contradict himself. Indeed, when Ibn Hishām mentioned the opinion of the scholars of Kūfa and of Abū 'Ubayda in allowing the jussive after أن, this required that the majority did not hold this opinion.⁴³⁵

Amongst those examples that we wish to cite—in order to help give a clearer picture of the debate between al-Shumunnī and other commentators on the *Mughnī*—is found in al-Shumunnī's defense of Ibn Hishām regarding the acceptability of omitting the *hamza* of interrogation. Ibn Hishām cites a verse of poetry, from which it is understood that it contains an omitted *hamza*:

طربت وما شوقا إلى البيض أطرب ولا لعبا مني وذو الشيب يلعب

Ibn Hishām commented upon the verse, saying that what was implied by the sentence was: أودو الشيب يلعب.

Al-Damāmīnī opposed Ibn Hishām on this point, saying that the verse should not be considered as a proof of the acceptability of omitting the *hamza*,

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 57.

since there is another possible understanding, which is that what has been omitted is the negation particle لا. In this case the implication would be: وذو الشيب لا يلعب.

Al-Shumunnī defends Ibn Hishām by mentioning that the latter did not cite the verse as a proof of the acceptability of omitting the *hamza*, but only as an example. And the difference between an example and a piece of evidence is that the example is brought to clarify a rule, while a piece of evidence is brought to confirm the rule.⁴³⁶

With regards to this issue of proof versus example, we see al-Shumunnī, in another part of his book, present a general rule in defending Ibn Hishām, saying:⁴³⁷

Know, that what the author mentions by way of a Qur’ānic verse or other quotation, as an example after mentioning a rule, does not necessitate his singling out that rule and lack of another possible alternative, rather it only necessitates it actually belonging to that rule. Remember this, and bear it in mind, because it will benefit you in answering many distortions.

Sometimes we find al-Shumunnī defending Ibn Hishām using his wide knowledge of the other sciences, such as rhetoric, for example. We see this regarding Ibn Hishām’s discussion of the *hamza* of interrogation, where the latter states that it must be followed by that about which is being asked (*mustafham*

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 26.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 24.

'*anh*). For example, when you say: أريدا لقيت أم بشرا (Did you meet Zaid or Bishr?); the *mustafham* '*anh* is زيد or بشر , and so it is not allowed, in his opinion, to say: لقيت أريدا أم بشرا, thus bringing forward the verb, لقيت.

Al-Damāmīnī criticizes Ibn Hishām at this point, saying that what Ibn Hishām has mentioned is not essential, but is instead acceptable and preferable. He then cites as evidence the sayings of grammarians such as Sībawayh, Ibn 'Uṣfūr, and al-Raḍī.

Here we see al-Shumunnī argue in defense of Ibn Hishām by turning to the science of rhetoric. He states that which is considered as good by the grammarians, may be seen as necessary by the scholars of rhetoric. Thus the obligation mentioned by Ibn Hishām is due to rhetorical considerations.⁴³⁸

This defense of Ibn Hishām demonstrates the wide learning of al-Shumunnī, as well as his rhetorical interests. Despite this, however, the defense put up by al-Shumunnī on this point is not very strong, since Ibn Hishām's book is not a work on rhetoric. He does not establish the rules of rhetoric in this book, but rather his discussion is limited to purely grammatical matters.

A notable incidence of al-Shumunnī refuting a severe criticism directed by al-Damāmīnī towards Ibn Hishām regards the latter's discussion of the conjunction أو , and in particular, regarding the fourth category of أو , which links

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 35.

two permitted things. Here Ibn Hishām cites the Qur’ānic verse:

{ولا تطع منهم أثما أو كفورا}

indicating that the negation particle لا , if it is added to a sentence containing أو , prohibits the two things which were permitted before the addition of لا .

Regarding this, al-Damāmīnī criticizes Ibn Hishām severely, and rejects his citation of Qur’ānic verse, on the basis that obedience to a sinner or an infidel was not at all permitted, even before the addition of the negation particle لا , so how can Ibn Hishām use it as an example?

Al-Shumunnī strongly defends Ibn Hishām here, and accuses al-Damāmīnī of carelessness and delusion. He states that the permissibility about which Ibn Hishām is speaking is linguistic and intellectual permissibility; and this is dependent upon the usefulness and meaning of what is being said, and not on its religious legality, as believed by al-Damāmīnī.⁴³⁹

The truth is that this was a brilliant response by al-Shumunnī, so much so that al-Amīr praised it in his commentary on *al-Mughnī*.

3.3 Al-Shumunnī’s Position vis-à-vis Ibn al-Ṣā’igh

Before discussing al-Shumunnī’s position vis-à-vis Ibn al-Ṣā’igh, it would be

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 134.

useful to give a brief account of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh.⁴⁴⁰

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh is regarded as one of the leading scholars that lived in Egypt during the 8th Islamic Century. He was born at the beginning of this century, prior to the year AH 710. He studied under a number of famous scholars, such as Ibn Jamā'a and Abū Ḥayyān. He excelled in a number of disciplines, most notable of which were grammar and jurisprudence; such that he was appointed judge and muftī. He was also a teacher in the Mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn.

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh wrote a number of works, of which al-Suyūṭī counted thirteen, in various fields. Amongst them was his commentary on *Mughnī al-Labīb*, which is of interest here. He died in 776/1375.

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh was considered the first to have written a commentary on Ibn Hishām's *Mughnī al-Labīb*, since he was a contemporary of Ibn Hishām, and died only fourteen years after him. However, he did not complete his commentary, only reaching the letter ب , i.e. about a quarter of the way through the book. We do not know why Ibn al-Ṣā'igh did not finish his work; it may be that he began it towards the end of his life, and died before its completion, or there may be some other reason. Ibn al-Ṣā'igh named his book: *Tanzīh al-Salaf 'an Tamwīh al-Khalaf* (Distancing the Forefathers from the Distortions of their Successors); a name bearing a degree of harshness, as if Ibn al-Ṣā'igh is insinuating that Ibn Hishām has attributed things to the ancients incorrectly, or else he has misunderstood what

⁴⁴⁰ See Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-Kāmina*, vol. III, p. 499; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, pp. 155,56; al-Ziriklī, vol. VI, p. 192.

they have said.

It is important to note that Ibn al-Şā'igh's commentary remains lost, so we have not been able to view a complete copy thereof. All that remains of Ibn al-Şā'igh's words are those that can be found in the work of al-Shumunnī, who preserved a good portion of Ibn al-Şā'igh's comments. Al-Shumunnī quoted fifty four texts from Ibn al-Şā'igh, making al-Shumunnī's book the richest source of Ibn al-Şā'igh's comments.

We turn now to the analysis of al-Shumunnī's position vis-à-vis Ibn al-Şā'igh and his commentary on *Mughnī al-Labīb* using al-Shumunnī's quotations of Ibn al-Şā'igh. Despite the fact that al-Shumunnī stated in the introduction to his book that one of his main objectives in writing it was to defend Ibn Hishām against the criticisms of Ibn al-Şā'igh, al-Shumunnī is not harsh towards Ibn al-Şā'igh, nor does he refute him on every issue; instead, he deals with him objectively, to a large degree, as will be seen.

Having studied the texts reported by al-Shumunnī, it is possible to classify them into four groups, depending upon the way in which al-Shumunnī deals with them. These are:

3.3.1 Being satisfied with commenting on Ibn Hishām by merely copying the words of Ibn al-Şā'igh

By this we mean that when al-Shumunnī chooses to comment on a text of Ibn Hishām's, he does so merely by reporting the words of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh, without addition. It is as if he is therefore confirming Ibn al-Ṣā'igh comments, whether the latter be opposing or clarifying the words of Ibn Hishām. The number of texts in this group is nine, an example being Ibn Hishām's discussion of the particle *أن* *al-nāṣiba* (which governs the subjunctive); he mentions that scholars of Kūfa and Abū 'Ubayda stated that there are some Arabs who put the present tense verb following *أن* into the jussive mood (*jazm*), instead of the subjunctive (*naṣb*). They cited as evidence for this certain verses of poetry, amongst them:

أحاذر أن تعلم بها فتردها ففتركها ثقلا عليّ كما هيا

Ibn Hishām comments upon this by saying that this cannot be accepted; the reason being that the word *تعلم* in the verse might appear vowel-less (without *sukūn*)—while still being in the subjunctive mood—due to necessity, and not because the *أن* has placed it in the jussive mood. The evidence for this is that the words linked to it by conjunctions (such as the words *فتردها* and *ففتركها*) are in the subjunctive mood.

When al-Shumunnī wished to comment upon this section by Ibn Hishām, he did so by merely quoting Ibn al-Ṣā'igh, who states:

The lack of vowel (السكون) in the word *تعلم* might also be due to contraction

(الإدغام), and not because of the jussive mood.

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh supports his comments by saying that one of the scholars of both language and the Qur'ānic recitations, Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā', transmitted a Qur'ānic recitation in which there is a contraction similar to that in the above verse of poetry.⁴⁴¹

We note here that Ibn al-Ṣā'igh supports the conclusions of Ibn Hishām, while al-Shumunnī, on his part, is content with merely reporting the words of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh.

Another example from this group, but one where Ibn al-Ṣā'igh opposes Ibn Hishām, is found in the chapter dealing with إذا , where Ibn Hishām states that it can sometimes be used other than as a conditional particle. He gives by way of example the Qur'ānic verse:

{وإذا ما غضبوا هم يغفرون}

saying that if إذا was being used in this verse as a conditional particle, the nominal sentence which forms the conclusion (*jawāb*) of the conditional sentence would have to be preceded by the letter ف ; that is to say, the sentence (هم يغفرون) would

⁴⁴¹ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 63.

have to be (فهم يغفرون). However, since إذا in this situation is not being used as a conditional particle, this is not necessary.

Ibn Hishām then adds that certain scholars have stated that the sentence coming as the conclusion of إذا is not actually a nominal sentence, but instead a verbal one, being: يغفرون. As for the pronoun هم, this is not the subject of a nominal sentence (*mubtada'*), but is an intensifying apposition (*tawkīd*) of the pronominal suffix in the word غضبوا. In this case, the Qur'ānic verse could not be cited as evidence by Ibn Hishām who responds to this, however, by calling it clear arbitrariness.

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh comments upon the words of Ibn Hishām by saying: “What aberration is there in intensifying a nominative, or an accusative pronominal suffix (*ḍamīr muṭṭasil*) with a nominative detached pronoun (*ḍamīr munfaṣil*)?” Thus, Ibn al-Ṣā'igh opposes Ibn Hishām, and al-Shumunnī concurs with him.⁴⁴²

3.3.2 Clarification and explication of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh's words

In this group we see al-Shumunnī clarifying the words of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh, after having quoted from his commentary on Ibn Hishām. Three texts represent this group, amongst which is the following example:

In the chapter regarding إذا, Ibn Hishām speaks about which word appears

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 210.

first in the sentence, mentioned the particle **إن** and the **ل** of initiation (*al-ibtidā'*), considering them as equal.

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh criticizes him for this, and says that they are not equal, since the **ل** loses its place at the start of the sentence when it is joined with **أن**. Ibn al-Ṣā'igh then indicates that Ibn Hishām noted this later in the book, or in another book.

Al-Shumunnī then comes to concur with Ibn al-Ṣā'igh regarding this, and to clarify that Ibn Hishām had indeed reconsidered his previous opinion, this being in the chapter regarding the **لام الابتداء**. There he mentions that if **إن** is added to a sentence beginning with **لام الصدارة**, it displaces it from its position at the beginning of the sentence.⁴⁴³

3.3.3 Remarking that Ibn al-Ṣā'igh preceded al-Damāmīnī

There are twelve occasions where al-Shumunnī remarks that al-Damāmīnī in his commentary on *Mughnī al-Labīb* was preceded to the same conclusion by Ibn al-Ṣā'igh. This is regardless of al-Shumunnī's position vis-à-vis the words of Ibn al-Ṣā'igh or al-Damāmīnī, whether these words be in opposition or in agreement with Ibn Hishām.

Among these occasions, is one which deals with Ibn Hishām's opinion, in the chapter regarding **أن** *al-nāṣiba* (which governs the subjunctive), that a present

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 209.

tense verb (*fi'l muḍāri'*) might sometimes be in the indicative case (*raf'*) after أن , despite the fact that, in principle, it puts the present tense verb into the subjunctive mood (*naṣb*). Ibn Hishām quotes an example of this, which is the Qur'ānic verse:

{لمن أراد أن يتم الرضاعة}

in one of the recitations attributed to Ibn Muḥaysin, wherein the present tense verb يتم comes in the indicative case in this recitation, in contrary to the well-known recitations, where it comes as subjunctive.

A-Shumunnī quotes the words of al-Damāmīnī, which oppose Ibn Hishām on this point. Al-Damāmīnī states that there is another possibility, which is that the present tense verb يتم is put into the subjunctive case by أن—as it should be—although this is seen, not through the appearance of the short *a* vowel (*fatha*), but through the omission of the letter ن . Hence in this context the action is being attributed to the pronoun of the third person plural, the original verb being يُتَمَوْنَ . The ن is then be omitted because of the addition of أن , and the و is omitted due to the prohibition of having two subsequent vowel-less letters, these being the و , and the conjunctive *hamza* (*hamzat al-waṣl*) in the word الرضاعة .

Al-Shumunnī comments on these words of al-Damāmīnī by saying that he was anticipated in this deduction by Ibn al-Ṣā'igh. He further adds that Ibn al-

Ṣā'igh's presentation of this point was better than that of al-Damāmīnī.⁴⁴⁴

3.3.4 Opposition to Ibn al-Ṣā'igh in his comments and explanation of *Mughnī al-Labīb*

This group receives the greatest share of al-Shumunnī's attention. We have already seen during our discussion of al-Shumunnī's purpose in writing his book that he wanted to defend Ibn Hishām against Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and al-Damāmīnī, and that he wanted to debate their criticisms of Ibn Hishām's work. As a result, this group of quotations, wherein he opposes Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and defends Ibn Hishām, is greater in number than the other groups; it contains twenty seven quotations. Some of these have already been mentioned during our discussion of al-Shumunnī's opinion of Ibn Hishām's views.⁴⁴⁵

A further example of this group is found in the chapter regarding أما, where Ibn Hishām cites the following verse:

أبا خراشة أما أنت ذا نفر فإن قومي لم تأكلهم السبع

He states here that أما is composed of the particle أن *al-maṣdariyya* and ما *al-zā'ida* (augmentative) and not of the form of أما which is a single word.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 63.

⁴⁴⁵ See: pp. 168ff above.

Ibn al-Ṣā'igh criticizes Ibn Hishām severely at this point, saying that the latter mentioned this verse previously, in the chapter regarding *أَنْ*, stating that it was more likely, in his opinion, that this was *أَنْ* *al-sharṭiyya* (conditional) and not *أَنْ* *al-maṣḍariyya* (which governs the subjunctive), so why has he contradicted himself?

Al-Shumunnī comes to the defense of Ibn Hishām, saying that the latter did not contradict himself. Rather, he mentioned previously that there were certain factors which gave preponderance to the opinion that *أَنْ* was *sharṭiyya* in the verse—as was believed by the scholars of Kūfa; however, this does not necessarily mean that Ibn Hishām himself favored this opinion. Al-Shumunnī adds that Ibn Hishām—after mentioning the opinion of the scholars of Kūfa that *أَنْ* was *sharṭiyya* in the verse—indicates, some lines later, that the correct opinion in his estimation was that it was *maṣḍariyya*. Thus it is as if Ibn al-Ṣā'igh did not notice this.⁴⁴⁶

3.4 Al-Shumunnī's Position vis-à-vis al-Damāmīnī

Having analyzed al-Shumunnī's position with regard to Ibn Hishām and then Ibn al-Ṣā'igh, it is now the turn of al-Damāmīnī, considered one of the most famous commentators on *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Before analyzing how al-Shumunnī, in his own commentary on *Mughnī al-Labīb*, viewed al-Damāmīnī, it may be appropriate

⁴⁴⁶ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 72.

to first give a brief introduction to the latter.⁴⁴⁷

Al-Damāmīnī, who is Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Damāmīnī, was born in Alexandria in 763/1362. He undertook the pursuit of knowledge, until he excelled in the fields of Islamic Law and the Arabic language. He was also a close student of the famous historian Ibn Khaldūn. He became one of the leading teachers of Arabic in the al-Azhar Mosque; however, he did not remain in Egypt. Instead, he traveled to Damascus, then to the Hijaz, and then on to Yemen, where he taught for a year, before finally moving to India, where he died in 827/1424.

As for al-Damāmīnī's writings, they are numerous, and cover various fields; however, the most famous of them is his commentary on *Mughnī al-Labīb*, known as *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*. He had two other commentaries on *Mughnī al-Labīb*, one of which is lost, while the other—of which there is an old printed edition—is incomplete, as al-Damāmīnī died before finishing it.

The commentary on which we wish to analyze al-Shumunnī's position is *Tuhfat al-Gharīb*, as it was this which al-Shumunnī looked at when writing his explanation of *Mughnī al-Labīb*. Al-Damāmīnī's work was one of the most important incentives for al-Shumunnī writing his commentary, as he mentions in the book's introduction.

In order to grasp the importance of al-Damāmīnī's work for al-Shumunnī, we should take note of the multitude of quotations that al-Shumunnī took from the

⁴⁴⁷ See al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. VII, p184; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ā*, vol. I, pp. 66,67; al-Ziriklī, vol. VI, p. 57.

former's work. These number in the region of 893 throughout the whole book, and in the section which I have edited—which constitutes one third of the book—277 quotations. These are the quotations which al-Shumunnī took from al-Damāmīnī with an explicit reference. As for those he cites without reference, having consulted the two works, and having thoroughly compared them with each other, I have found that al-Shumunnī cites in the region of 324 texts over the whole book without mentioning that he took them from al-Damāmīnī. Naturally, these are the quotations which al-Shumunnī took word for word. As for the occasions when only the meaning was copied, these are also very numerous.

To return to al-Shumunnī's position vis-à-vis al-Damāmīnī, it should be noted that this has already been touched on three times. The first time was during our discussion of the methodology of al-Shumunnī, or more specifically, when speaking about language and the extent of al-Shumunnī's dependence upon al-Damāmīnī in dealing with the linguistic side of his commentary. The second occasion was while speaking about al-Shumunnī's position with regards to Ibn Hishām. And the third was during our discussion of al-Shumunnī's position vis-à-vis Ibn al-Ṣā'igh.

As with Ibn Hishām and Ibn al-Ṣā'igh, al-Shumunnī does not set out to oppose al-Damāmīnī, but rather treats him objectively. Thus he does not deal with him harshly despite the number of al-Damāmīnī's objections and criticisms of Ibn Hishām. Moreover, al-Shumunnī does not reject all that al-Damāmīnī says.

Al-Shumunnī's position vis-à-vis al-Damāmīnī can be defined as follows:

3.4.1 Opposition to al-Damāmīnī and defense of Ibn Hishām

There is no doubt that the group of examples representing this tendency have the large share in al-Shumunnī's book. As previously mentioned, defending Ibn Hishām against his critics, the most famous of whom were Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and al-Damāmīnī, was one of al-Shumunnī's main aims in writing his book.

Sufficient examples of this point have already been given during our discussion of al-Shumunnī's position vis-à-vis Ibn Hishām, and in particular, during the section dealing with the defense of Ibn Hishām.⁴⁴⁸ Thus we will suffice with these previous examples.

3.4.2 Being satisfied with al-Damāmīnī's comments on Ibn Hishām

In many parts of al-Shumunnī's work we find him content to merely quote al-Damāmīnī in commenting on a text from the *Mughnī*, without adding any remarks, be they positive or negative. On some of these occasions, al-Damāmīnī is clarifying what Ibn Hishām has said, without any criticism or opposition. An example of this occurs in his discussion on the particle *إِذَا*, Ibn Hishām mentions that, besides the eight well-known uses, it has several others, amongst which is its

⁴⁴⁸ See: p. 176 above.

expressing certainty (*tahqīq*)—in which it resembles the particle قد . Ibn Hishām then adds that some grammarians understand a particular Qur’ānic verse containing إذا according to this use; however, he does not clarify which verse he intends.

Al-Damāmīnī deduces from the surrounding context, and using his grammatical knowledge, that the said verse is {ولن ينفعكم اليوم إذا ظلمتم}.

This explanation of al-Damāmīnī is cited by al-Shumunnī without any addition or comment.⁴⁴⁹

On other occasions al-Damāmīnī criticizes, or sets right Ibn Hishām, and still al-Shumunnī is satisfied with merely copying al-Damāmīnī without comment. For example, while speaking about the particle أو, Ibn Hishām mentions that al-Zamakhsharī claims that the particle و may be used to give the meaning of permission (*ibāḥa*), meaning that it allows one to choose between alternatives, as is the case with the particle أو . Ibn Hishām adds that al-Qazwīnī, author of *al-Īdāḥ al-Bayānī*, followed al-Zamakhsharī in this opinion. Ibn Hishām then states that such an opinion has never been held by any other grammarian.

However, al-Damāmīnī does not accept this claim of Ibn Hishām, answering that this opinion is known to the leading grammarians, amongst the

⁴⁴⁹ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 181.

most famous of whom is al-Sīrāfī, considered one of the most famous grammarians to have written a commentary on the book of Sībawayh. Al-Sīrāfī mentions this matter in his commentary, where he gives examples of it, amongst which is that if one was to say *جلس الحسن وابن سيرين*, it would be the same as saying *جلس الحسن أو ابن سيرين*.

Al-Damāmīnī adds that Ibn Hishām himself retracted this opinion in another book, his explication of the *al-Tashīl* of Ibn Mālik, in which he mentions that using the particle *و* for permission was acceptable.

Al-Shumunnī copies al-Damāmīnī here in full, without adding any comment. From this it is understood that al-Shumunnī agrees with al-Damāmīnī in this opinion.⁴⁵⁰

3.4.3 Clarification and explanation of al-Damāmīnī's words

In certain places in al-Shumunnī's commentary, it can be seen that he quotes al-Damāmīnī and then clarifies or confirms the information given. For example, in the chapter dealing with the letter *l*, Ibn Hishām states that the *l* can be used as a vocative particle (*ḥarf nidā'*) for calling someone close by. He cites as evidence the following verse of poetry:

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 138.

أفاطم مهلا بعض هذا التدلل وإن كنت قد أزمعت صرمي فأجملي

The word فاطم is the noun in the vocative (*munādā*) and the ¹ is the vocative particle. Al-Damāmīnī comments on what Ibn Hishām has said, saying that the confirmation that the vocative here is for someone close by, is the *qarīna* (context), which is evident. However, he does not then clarify the nature of this *qarīna*.

Al-Shumunnī explains that the *qarīna* referred to by al-Damāmīnī is the poet's addressing his beloved directly after the vocative, and his blaming her. Such a thing only usually occurs between two people close by one another.⁴⁵¹

Thus we see that al-Shumunnī clarified al-Damāmīnī's words, removing any ambiguity. Despite this, al-Shumunnī's explanation of the context does not provide a powerful argument, since this style is common in poetry. Indeed, Arab love poetry is for the most part in compliance with what al-Shumunnī has said, that is to say the poet always addresses his beloved as if she is close by him, yet this does not mean that she is physically near to him.

Another example of confirming al-Damāmīnī's words is found when the latter indicates at one particular point—regarding Ibn Hishām's discussion of the Qur'ānic verse {إن امروء هلك ليس له ولد}—that the word هلك is considered to be a *ḥāl*

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 18.

(circumstantial expression), as is maintained by certain grammarians, and not a *sifa* (qualifier), as Ibn Hishām believes.

Al-Shumunnī comments here that the one who advanced, and gave preponderance to this opinion, was Abū al-Baqā' al-'Ukbarī.⁴⁵² By this comment al-Shumunnī seems to be confirming what al-Damāmīnī has said.

3.4.4 Supporting al-Damāmīnī in his criticism of Ibn Hishām

On these occasions al-Shumunnī believes al-Damāmīnī is right and just in his criticism of Ibn Hishām, and thus he supports his opinion. Examples of this type are very few, since, when he agrees with al-Damāmīnī and supports him, al-Shumunnī either remains silent concerning al-Damāmīnī's commentary or he cites it without comment, as seen above in point number 2. To confirm his support is rare, an example of this being, during Ibn Hishām's discussion of the *hamza* of interrogation (*hamzat al-istifhām*), he states that it has eight uses besides the main one, which is interrogation. He then gives various examples of these uses, before mentioning that certain grammarians stated other uses than these eight, but that these are incorrect.

Al-Damāmīnī opposes Ibn Hishām, saying: "What prevents there being other uses besides these eight should they suit the situation and the accompanying

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 152.

context?”

After quoting these words of al-Damāmīnī, al-Shumunnī confirms the correctness of his opinion, giving as evidence the fact that the author of *al-Īdāh* (al-Qazwīnī) mentions that it is used for *tahdīd* (threatening), referring to the Qur’ānic verse {ألم نهلك الأولين} as an example. This use does not appear amongst the eight uses given by Ibn Hishām, while claiming that other uses are incorrect.⁴⁵³

3.5 Al-Shumunnī’s Position vis-à-vis the Earlier Scholars

One can clearly see the opinions and sayings of his predecessors, from the time when works on grammar were first compiled upto al-Shumunnī’s era himself, scattered throughout his work. Of course, this is not unusual, as the book which al-Shumunnī was explaining is one of the largest and most important works on Arabic grammar, which is itself replete with the opinions and sayings of different grammarians. Ibn Hishām was one of the leading scholars of grammar; one who had broad learning and unique knowledge of the works of former scholars and thus, his own book, *Mughnī al-Labīb*, is replete with their opinions.

It is worth noting that al-Shumunnī does not lag behind Ibn Hishām in terms of his extensive learning and his knowledge of the works of previous masters. As a result, his commentary is itself rich with quotations from earlier

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 38.

scholars and discussion of their opinions.

Moving on to clarify al-Shumunnī's stance regarding previous scholars, it is noticeable that he is not one of those who is fanatical in his attachment to a particular scholar, no matter who he be. Nor is there any particular scholar whom he sets out to contradict or to find fault with. Rather, he inclines towards fairness and moderation in his judgements. We have already seen how he views Ibn Hishām; in particular, how he does not support him fanatically nor agree with him on every issue.⁴⁵⁴ Moreover, he does not always oppose Ibn al-Ṣā'igh and al-Damāmīnī in all the points in which they differ with Ibn Hishām, despite the fact that al-Shumunnī's main aim in writing his book was to counter them and to defend Ibn Hishām.

3.5.1 Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad

Turning to al-Shumunnī's work, one finds that the oldest grammarian mentioned by al-Shumunnī, whose opinions are frequently given, is al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī. Al-Khalīl is considered one of the founders of the science of grammar,

and was, in addition, the greatest teacher of Sībawayh.⁴⁵⁵

Since al-Khalīl is one of those scholars that excelled in many disciplines, in

⁴⁵⁴ See: pp. 168ff above.

⁴⁵⁵ See al-Anbārī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad. *Nuzhat al-Alibbā' fi Ṭabaqāt al-'Uḍabā'*. 3rd ed. by Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā'ī. Jordan: Maktabat al-Manār, 1984. p. 45; Ibn Khallikān. *Wafayāt al-A'yān*. Edited by Iḥsān 'Abbās. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1987. vol. II, p. 244.

particular in the fields of language and grammar, it is noticeable that al-Shumunnī sometimes quotes him on a language issue, such as when he cites him when explaining the word أزع;⁴⁵⁶ and sometimes quotes him on an issue of grammar, in which case he generally quotes al-Khalīl's opinion without commenting on it, neither positively nor negatively. An example of the latter is when al-Shumunnī mentions al-Khalīl as saying that it is permitted to omit the word which has been emphasized (*al-mu'akkad*) while retaining the emphasis (*al-tawkīd*); al-Shumunnī reports this opinion without passing judgment upon it.⁴⁵⁷

As for the few issues where he opposes al-Khalīl's opinion, in these he follows Ibn Hishām, and explains the opinion without giving a judgment upon it. In addition, reference to the point of opposition is brief, and free from any explication or detail. An example of this regards Ibn Hishām's discussion of the particle أي, where he states that it can be a relative pronoun (*ism mawṣūl*), citing as evidence the Qur'ānic verse لننزعن من كل شيعة أيهم أشد .

Ibn Hishām states that أي in this verse is a relative pronoun, and that some grammarians, amongst them al-Khalīl, said that أي in this verse, in particular, is interrogative and not relative.

Al-Shumunnī then clarifies Ibn Hishām's words, although without presenting his own opinion on the matter.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. I, p. 19.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 152.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 168.

3.5.2 Sībawayh

Sībawayh is another figure from amongst the early grammarians who figures strongly in al-Shumunnī's book. The work of Sībawayh is the earliest grammar book which scholars throughout the ages have made frequent use of. As a result, it holds a scholarly position, unrivalled by any other grammar book. Indeed, the principles of grammar contained in later works of grammar are only an echo of what is found in the book of Sībawayh.⁴⁵⁹ As a result, it is not surprising that works of grammar are replete with the opinions of Sībawayh, as well as the prose and poetry examples mentioned by him.

Al-Shumunnī's book is not an exception to this rule. Thus, we often find him referring to the opinions and citations of Sībawayh. Having studied the occasions where al-Shumunnī quotes Sībawayh, it is possible to divide them into three categories:

3.5.2.1 Agreeing with Sībawayh

The great majority of grammatical issues can be considered as belonging to this category, i.e. as being in agreement with Sībawayh. This is because the primary source of grammar for the Arabic language—as mentioned above—is the book of

⁴⁵⁹ See al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-Alibbā'*, p. 84; Ibn Khallikān, vol. III, p. 463.

Sībawayh, and all the books that followed it have borrowed from it in some shape or form. Thus, Sībawayh and his teachers, particularly al-Khalīl, are the ones who compiled the majority of grammatical issues. As a result, it is as if presentations of issues in grammar books are nothing more than re-representation of what Sībawayh has already stated in one form or another. Thus, subsequent authors on grammar do not then need to refer to Sībawayh on every issue as else they will be obliged to mention his name in every line. Rather, they refer to him when someone opposes him on a particular issue and it is then that they begin to analyze and discuss his opinions directly.

The book of al-Shumunnī, which we are now discussing, is not very different from that which we have just stated. Thus we rarely see him comment on an issues in which the opinion of Sībawayh is the standard opinion or even when it is considered preferable. Rather, he contents himself with mentioning Sībawayh on issues where the latter's opinion is not considered any more preferable, or where it is considered less preferable to another. This can be seen in the two following categories.

3.5.2.2 Reporting Sībawayh's words without commenting positively or negatively upon them

Al-Shumunnī's book contains many of Sībawayh's sayings and opinions, and on many occasions where the words of Sībawayh are quoted, al-Shumunnī does not

supply any comment, either in agreement, or in opposition. An example of this is his comments when Ibn Hishām, in the chapter regarding ما, states that (when used as a relative pronoun) it does not need to be followed by an 'ā'id (pronoun referring back to the relative pronoun). Al-Shumunnī then undertakes to explain the difference of opinion between Sībawayh and al-Akhfash about whether the word ما is an *ism* (noun) or a *ḥarf* (particle)—Sībawayh considering it a *ḥarf*, and al-Akhfash considering it an *ism*; although, according to neither opinion does it require a pronoun referring back to it from within the relative clause. Al-Shumunnī does not give preponderance to one opinion over the other, merely contenting himself with mentioning the two opinions.⁴⁶⁰

It should be noted that on many occasions al-Shumunnī mentions Sībawayh's opinion after his name has been stated, or his opinion alluded to, in Ibn Hishām's book. An example of this is found in the chapter regarding أي, where Ibn Hishām mentions that it is sometimes used as a relative pronoun, citing the Qur'ānic verse {ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ}, saying that this was the opinion of Sībawayh, although the scholars of Kūfa opposed him on this. Al-Shumunnī then explains the difference between the two opinions, without giving preponderance to any one opinion over the other.⁴⁶¹

Sometimes al-Shumunnī explains the words of Ibn Hishām by quoting Sībawayh, as if he is indicating that Ibn Hishām copied from Sībawayh without alluding to the fact. An example of this is al-Shumunnī's explanation of Ibn

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Shumunnī, *al-Munṣif min al-Kalām*, vol. II, p. 80.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 167.

Hishām's phrase (while speaking about the verb عسى):

ومعناه الترجي في المحبوب والإشفاق أي الخوف في المكروه

Its meaning is hoping for that which is loved, and fearing
that which is hated.

Here al-Shumunnī cites the opinion of Sībawayh, which is that

(عسى) تأتي للطمع والإشفاق, فالطمع للمحبوب, والإشفاق للمكروه

عسى is used for expressing desire and anxiety: desire for that
which is loved, and anxiety for that which is hated.

This is almost exactly the same as what has been stated by Ibn Hishām. It is thus
as if al-Shumunnī is indicating that the origin of the phrase is not Ibn Hishām but
Sībawayh.⁴⁶²

Sometimes the opinion of Sībawayh is given by al-Shumunnī as part of a
quotation taken from another grammarian, either al-Damāmīnī, as is most
common, or another of the former grammarians. For example, he quotes al-
Taftazānī saying that Sībawayh considers that the origin of the word الله is the verb
لا, meaning 'to be veiled' or 'to be concealed'.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 300.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 4.

3.5.2.3 Opposing Sībawayh or considering his opinion weak.

Despite the high status of Sībawayh and of his book, considered the primary source of Arabic grammar, he has still found opposition from grammarians from his time onwards—even though, for the most part, scholars of grammar look to Sībawayh with high regard and respect.

As for al-Shumunnī, his work also includes certain points where he opposes Sībawayh's opinion, or at least considers it weak. These occasions are, however, very few, not exceeding three in the whole book. It is noticeable that on each of these occasions, al-Shumunnī ascribes the opposition to some other grammarian; he does not personally contest Sībawayh's opinion. Instead, he refrains from giving his opinion on the issue, and thus he seemingly shows his agreement with the opposing opinion that he is citing.

The first of these three occasions is not an issue of grammar; rather, it is one of lexicology and etymology. It relates to the discussion of the word الله, as scholars have differed regarding its etymology. Al-Shumunnī cites al-Taftazānī as saying that the preferred opinion is that it is derived from the word الله, and not from the word لا as was the opinion of Sībawayh. Al-Shumunnī does not comment upon this.⁴⁶⁴

The second occasion regards the particle ان *al-maṣḍariyya* (which governs

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 4.

the subjunctive), scholars having differed about whether it can be followed by an imperative verb or not. Al-Shumunnī relates from al-Raḍī that the preferred opinion is that it cannot be followed by an imperative verb, in contradiction to Sībawayh's opinion.⁴⁶⁵ Al-Shumunnī contents himself by merely stating the words of al-Raḍī, without comment.

The third occasion regards the discussion of *لولا*, which scholars have disagreed about when it is connected with a genitive pronoun, such as *لولا* and *لولاك*. Al-Shumunnī reported again from al-Raḍī that Sībawayh considers it a preposition in this situation, while the scholars of Kūfa and al-Akhfash do not; al-Raḍī regards Sībawayh's opinion as weak. Al-Shumunnī does not object to this, nor does he offer any comment.⁴⁶⁶

3.6 Al-Shumunnī's Sources

During our discussion of al-Shumunnī's methodology, we identified a number of his sources, and particularly those linked with language (lexicology and etymology). There we saw that, as regards language, the *al-Sihāḥ* of al-Jawharī is considered the most important of the sources on which al-Shumunnī depends, followed by *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ* of al-Fayrūz'ābādī.⁴⁶⁷

Moving on to the rest of the sources (besides the dictionaries), we find that

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 61.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 65.

⁴⁶⁷ See: p. 137 above.

he uses works of many and varied types. This indicates his wide learning and his remarkable ability to benefit from a vast number of sources in a wide range of disciplines, linked to a greater or lesser degree with the science of grammar.

Following our analytical study of al-Shumunnī's work, it has been found that there are three main types of work on which he relies. The first of these is grammatical works, the second is works of Qur'ānic exegesis, and the third is books of rhetoric. This is in addition to a number of other works, covering many fields, which cannot be included in these three main types. Thus, for example, he uses books on Ḥadīth, on literature, on theology, and on other topics.

3.6.1 Grammatical works

Starting with the books of grammar, it is noticeable that al-Shumunnī pays particular attention to the *Sharḥ Kāfiyat Ibn al-Ḥājib* of Raḍī al-Dīn al-Astarābādhī (known as al-Raḍī). After close examination of this book, it is clear that it is the most important of the grammar works that al-Shumunnī relies upon in his commentary. This does not mean that he relies upon the opinions of al-Raḍī, rather the work is an essential source for al-Shumunnī, from which he cites many grammatical opinions and issues. Indeed, al-Shumunnī quotes from the book of al-Raḍī 114 times. These are only the quotations which al-Shumunnī directly attributes to al-Raḍī; there are many other places where al-Shumunnī quotes from al-Raḍī without indicating this. It is also noticeable that al-Shumunnī usually

quotes from al-Raḍī verbatim, although on occasion he can be seen to summarize the latter's words.

Following this, the works of Ibn Mālik—of which there are several—are the next most important (as regards the number of quotations taken from them) of the grammatical sources for al-Shumunnī. The number of quotations taken from all of Ibn Mālik's works is 145. The book of Ibn Mālik on which al-Shumunnī depends the most, and from which he quotes most often, is the *Sharḥ al-Tashīl*. Following this is the *Tashīl* itself, then the *Sharḥ al-Kāfiya al-Shāfiya*, then the *Shawāhid al-Tawḍīh*, and finally the *Sharḥ 'Umdat al-Ḥāfiẓ*.

After al-Raḍī and Ibn Mālik, there are a large number of other grammatical works from which al-Shumunnī benefits, although to a lesser degree. In this regard, we can note the works of Ibn al-Ḥājib, and in particular the *Sharḥ al-Kāfiya*, the *Sharḥ al-Mufaṣṣal*, and the *al-Amālī*; and in addition, the books of al-Murādī, particularly the *Sharḥ al-Tashīl* and the *Sharḥ al-Alfiyya*.

3.6.2 Works of Qur'ānic exegesis

As for the second type of al-Shumunnī's sources, the works of Qur'ānic exegesis, the *al-Kashshāf* of al-Zamakhsharī comes in the vanguard, with more than 200 quotations being taken from it. It is also noticeable that al-Shumunnī quotes from *al-Kashshāf* verbatim, as was the case with al-Raḍī, except for a few occasions, where he summarizes to some degree.

There is no other work of exegesis that approaches *al-Kashshāf* in terms of the use al-Shumunnī makes of it; although, we can say that al-Taftāzānī's commentary on the same, named *Ḥāshiyat al-Taftāzānī 'alā al-Kashshāf*, can be considered as one of al-Shumunnī's important sources. Thus he quotes from it on nearly 90 occasions. After this, in terms of importance, is the *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* of Abū Ḥayyān, the *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz* of Ibn 'Aṭīyya, and finally the *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*.

3.6.3 Books of rhetoric

Finally we arrive at the third type of sources that al-Shumunnī utilises; these being the works on rhetoric. It is by no means strange that a scholar like al-Shumunnī should refer to works of grammar, of Qur'ānic exegesis, and of rhetoric, since these disciplines are closely linked with one another. Thus, works of exegesis and of rhetoric, particularly of semantics (*'ilm al-ma'ānī*) depend greatly upon the field of grammar. However, it is not easy for anyone who has not mastered these disciplines, becoming skilled in each, to combine them in his writings, as is done by al-Shumunnī and those of his stature.

As for the most important rhetorical source for al-Shumunnī, this is the *al-Muṭawwal* of Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī, in addition to the commentary on it authored by al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. This is not unexpected, since al-Shumunnī paid great interest to works of rhetoric, and particularly to the work *al-Muṭawwal*. This

he used to teach without needing to refer to the original text, due to his deep knowledge and understanding of the work. In this regard, al-Sakhāwī, in his biography of al-Shumunnī, mentions⁴⁶⁸ that a number of students who traveled to Egypt from the East (Persia) were astonished by al-Shumunnī when they discussed with him certain intricate issues about semantics, from the book *al-Muṭawwal* in particular. This is in consideration of the fact that they used to believe that greater interest and understanding of works of rhetoric was something peculiar to their country. Thus, given his obvious mastery and love of the subject, al-Shumunnī's use of rhetorical works in his commentary on *al-Mughnī*, a work purely on grammar, is understandable.

The number of occasions on which al-Shumunnī points to his having quoted from the *al-Muṭawwal* or its commentary is 53. This is by no means an insignificant number if we realize that books of grammar only rely upon works of rhetoric on very rare occasions.

In addition to the *al-Muṭawwal* and its commentary, there are some other rhetorical sources which al-Shumunnī relies upon, the most important of which are the *Miftāḥ al-'Ulūm* of al-Sakkākī and the *al-Īdāḥ* of al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī.

⁴⁶⁸ Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Daw' al-Lāmi'*, vol. II, p. 176.

3.7 Description Of The Manuscripts And Where They Are Found

A search for material was made, with the following results:

Two editions of the *Munṣif* have been published: the offset edition printed in Tehran in 1273/1858,⁴⁶⁹ and the Cairo edition of 1304/1890. The first of these is a photocopy of an unknown ms., and being of minimal currency among those

⁴⁶⁹ Printed in Qumm by Adab al-Ḥawza.

interested in the field of grammar, is of little academic value as a source for my critical edition. The latter (Cairo edition), while also being based on an unknown ms., is widely used, and thus is important as a source for the purposes of comparison, and for clarifying the mistakes found therein, which are numerous.

In addition, I have personally managed to find thirty mss. Of these:

Twenty-four mss. of the *Munşif* exist in Turkey. Fourteen of these are in the Sulimanye Library in Istanbul and the rest are in other libraries.

Two mss. are in Tunisia, Two in the Escorial in Spain, one in the Chester Beatty collection in Ireland, and there is one ms. in Sala, Morrocco, and one in Madina, Saudi Arabia.

Having surveyed these, three were found to be suitable sources for a critical edition—in addition to the Cairo edition of 1304/1890, which will be alluded to through the use of the Arabic letter (ب). This is because of the completeness and the legibility of their script, and their proximity to the age of al-Shumunnī—two of them being written in the lifetime of al-Shumunnī, and the other a few years after his death.

The first ms. was written by al-Shumunnī himself in 866/1462, six years before his death. The second, which actually predates the first, was written by Muḥammad al-Ḥasanī in 854/1450, and was transcribed directly from another, no longer extant copy written by al-Shumunnī, as mentioned on its last page. The third ms. is in the

‘Arif-Hekmat Library in Madina and was written by Muḥammad al-Muḥibbī in 888/1483, who states on its last page that he checked it against another, which had been read in the presence of al-Shumunnī by some of his students.

Details of the Reliable Manuscripts

1. MS. of the library of Damad Ibrahim Paşa, No. 1084 (in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi). This is one volume consisting of 350 folios measuring 14 x 30cm. On each page there are 32 lines. It was written by al-Shumunnī himself in 866/1462, six years before his death, as mentioned above. This manuscript will be referred to through the use of the Arabic letter (ر).
2. MS. of the library of Veliyyüddin Efendi, No. 3004 (in Bayezid Devlet Kütüphanesi). This is one volume consisting of 332 folios. On each page there are 38 lines. It was written by Muḥammad al-Ḥasaynī in 854/1450 and transcribed directly from al-Shumunnī’s copy. This manuscript will be referred to through the use of the Arabic letter (س).
3. MS. Of the ‘Arif-Ḥekmat Library in Madina, No. 2676. This is one volume consisting of 261 folios, measuring 18.5 x 25.5cm. On each page there are 31 lines. This MS. was written by Muḥammad al-Muḥibbī in 888/1484, and

was checked against a MS. which had been read in the presence of al-Shumunnī. This manuscript will be referred to through the use of the Arabic letter (ف).

Brief Description of the Other Manuscripts

1- Those Manuscripts Found in Turkey

a) Those of the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi

- MS. of the library of Damad Ibrahim Paşa, No. 1086. This is one volume consisting of 216 folios, measuring 18.7 x 27.4cm. On each page there are 38 lines. This is the MS. of the author's student Ibrahim al-Makhzūmī, who read it to al-Shumunnī in 851/1448.
- Second MS. of the Damad Ibrahim Paşa, No. 1085. This is one volume consisting of 291 folios, measuring 18.3 x 27.1cm. On each page there are 35 lines. This MS. was written, in a clear *naskh* script, by Khayr al-Dīn Sinter in 989/1581.

- MS. of the Yeni Medrese, No. 237. This is one volume consisting of 387 folios, measuring 14 x 18.5cm. On each page there are 21 lines. It was written by Shams al-Dīn al-Wazīrī, but is without date.
- MS. of the Fâtih Kütüphanesi, No. 5044. This is one volume consisting of 400 folios, measuring 14.7 x 30cm. On each page there are 31 lines. It was written, in a good *naskh* script, by Khalīl ibn Muḥammad on 1083/1672.
- MS. of Kılıç Ali Paşa library, No. 918. This is one volume consisting of 241 folios, measuring 18 x 26.7cm. On each page there are 35 lines. It was written, in a delicate *naskh* script, by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusāmī, but is without date.⁴⁷⁰
- MS. of Âşhir Efendi library, No. 261. This is one volume consisting of 257 folios, measuring 16.5 x 27.5cm. It was written, in a delicate *naskh* script, on 997/1588.
- MS. of the Bağhdadı Vehbi Efendi library, No. 1897. This is one volume consisting of 277 folios, measuring 18.5 x 27.2cm. On each page there are 33 lines. It was written, in a *naskh* script, by ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad al-Wiṭāsī al-Shāfi‘ī in 883/1479.

⁴⁷⁰ See Brockelmann, vol. VI, p. 77.

- MS. of the Molla Çelebi library, No. 134. This is one volume consisting of 233 folios, measuring 18.5 x 26.7cm. On each page there are 35 lines. It was written, in a delicate *naskh* script, by ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Muwaykī on 889/1484.
- MS. of the Yazma Bağışlar (in Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi), No. 1203. This is one volume consisting of 250 folios, measuring 18.5 x 27cm. On each page there are 27 lines. It was written, in a *naskh* script, by Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥanafī, but is without date.
- MS. of the Mehmed Ağa Câmii library, No. 175. This is one volume consisting of 320 folios, measuring 18.8 x 27.3cm. On each page there are 25 lines. It was written, in a good *naskh* script, by Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Salāmī, but is without date.
- MS. of the Carullah Veliyyüddin Efendi library, No. 1900. This is one volume consisting of 236 folios, measuring 18.7 x 27.8cm. On each page there are 33 lines. It was written, in a delicate *naskh* script, by ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Jamāl al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Damanhūrī al-Buḥayrī al-Shāfi‘ī in Mecca on 965/1558.

- MS. of the Carullah Veliyyüddin Efendi library, No. 1899. This is one volume consisting of 304 folios, measuring 18.5 x 26.5cm. On each page there are 33 lines, in a reasonable *naskh* script. It was Writtin by an unknown writer, and is without date.
- MS. of the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, No. 954. This is one volume consisting of 342 folios, measuring 18 x 25.5cm. On each page there are 31 lines. It was written, in a delicate *ta'liq* script, by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maḥallī al-Shāfi'ī on 961/1554.

b) Those found elsewhere in Turkey

- MS. of the Feyzulla Efendi Bölümü library (in Millet Kütüphanesi), No. 1927. This is one volume consisting of 339 folios, measuring 18.2 x 25.5cm. On each page there are 31 lines. It was written, in a *naskh* script, by Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad in 993/1585.
- Second MS. of the library of Feyzulla Efendi Bölümü library (in Millet Kütüphanesi), No. 1928. This is one volume consisting of 199 folios,

measuring 18.8 x 28cm. On each page there are 38 lines. It was written in a *ta'liq* script in 948/1541.

- Third MS. of the library of Feyzulla Efendi Bölümü library (in Millet Kütüphanesi), No. 1926. This is one volume consisting of 401 folios, measuring 18 x 26cm. On each page there are 32 lines. It was written, in a *naskh* script, by Muḥammad ibn Nu'mān al-Ījī in 1032/1622.
- MS. of İstanbul Üniversitesi Merkez Kütüphanesi - Arapça Yazmalar, No. 2449. This is two volumes consisting of 124 + 329 folios. It was written by an unknown writer, and is without date.
- MS. of İzmir Milli Kütüphanesi, No. 688. This is one volume consisting of 268 folios, measuring 18.3 x 28cm. On each page there are 36 lines. It was written in a *naskh* script by an unknown writer in 921/1515.
- Second MS. of the library of İzmir Milli Kütüphanesi, No. 689. This is one volume consisting of 326 folios, measuring 18 x 26cm. On each page there are 31 lines. It was written in a *naskh* script by an unknown writer, and is without date.

- MS. of Kütahya-Vahid Paşa Kütp, No. 1212. This is one volume consisting of 297 folios, measuring 18.8 x 28.6cm. It was written, in a *diwānī* script, by al-Mawlā Ismā‘īl Efendi in 968/1560.
- MS. of Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi - Üsküdar in İstanbul, No. 1166. This is one volume consisting of 340 folios, measuring 18 x 24cm. It was written, in a *naskh* script, by al-Mawlā Sharaf al-Dīn, but is without date.
- MS. of Bayezid Devlet Kütüphanesi, No. 6450. This is one volume consisting of 289 folios, measuring 19 x 28.6cm. It was Written by an unknown writer, and is without date.

2-Other Manuscripts

- MS. of Chester Beatty, No. 5049. This is one volume consisting of 327 folios, measuring 15.5 x 26cm. On each page there are 29 lines. It was written in a reasonable *naskh* script on 966/1559.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷¹ See Arberry, Arthur J. *Fihris al-Makhtūṭāt al-‘Arabiyya fī Maktabat Chester Beatty*. tran. Mḥmūd Shākir Sa‘īd. Amman: Mu’assasat Āl al-Bayt li l-Fikr al-Islāmī, 1993. vol. II, p. 1101.

- MS. of the Sala in Morrocco, No. 32. This is one volume consisting of 258 folios, measuring 19 x 27cm. On each page there are 27 lines. It was written by Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jirārī on 971/1564.
- MS. of the National Library of Tunisia, No. 15651. This is one volume consisting of 255 folios, measuring 19 x 26cm. On each page there are 23 lines. It was written, in a good *naskh* script, by ‘Alī al-Abyārī on 1021/1612.
- Second MS. of the National Library of Tunisia, No. 15652. This is one volume consisting of 185 folios, measuring 19 x 26cm. On each page there are 25 lines. It was written, in a *maghribī* script, on 913/1507.
- MS. of the Escorial in Spain, No. 49. This is one volume consisting of 304 folios, measuring 18 x 24cm. On each page there are 33 lines. It was written, in a reasonable *naskh* script, by ‘Alī al-‘Abādī al-Ṭayyib on 992/1584.
- Second MS. of the Escorial in Spain, No. 204. This is one volume consisting of 286 folios, measuring 18 x 24cm. On each page there are 31 lines. It was written, in a good *naskh* script, by ‘Alī Ibn ‘Alī al-‘Abādī, but is without date.

3.8 My Methodology in Editing the Work

In editing this part of al-Shumunnī's work I have followed the following methodology:

- I have established the text of the work by comparing the different manuscripts. When differences occur, I have chosen the most appropriate

word or phrase from the various manuscripts, so as to obtain the closest sense to that sought by the original author of the work. On such occasions, alternative readings have been given in the footnotes.

- I have written the text according to the rules of orthography, since the manuscripts generally do not adhere to these. Thus, for example, they often neglect to add the dots on the Arabic letters, as well as the *hamzas*. In addition, I have vocalised certain words, in order to prevent any ambiguity.
- I have marked Qur'ānic verses by placing them between braces { }. Then I have referred to the number of each verse and the *sūra* from which it was taken. With regard to the variant Qur'ānic readings cited in the work, I have given references in books specializing in this field.
- With regard to the prophetic and other narratives cited in the text, I have indicated references in their original sources.
- Similarly, with the verses of poetry given by al-Shumunnī in the work, I have indicated the text from which they are cited. This has been done by referring back to the *diwans* of the poet, should he have any, or otherwise by looking to the earliest sources to have mentioned the verse. Furthermore,

in the footnotes I have completed the verses which al-Shumunnī only gave in part.

- I have given references for the sayings and opinions of the grammarians, which al-Shumunnī cited in his work. This was done by going back to their original works where possible, or, when the original is no longer extant, to the secondary sources in which these are quoted.
- I have given brief biographical notes for those individuals mentioned in the work, and for each individual have indicated at least three biographical references.
- During my use of the sources, I have listed all the works used chronologically.
- I have recorded the page numbers of the manuscripts on which I have depended in editing the work. This has been done by placing them between square brackets []. Following the number, I refer with the letter (ل) to the front of the page, and with the letter (ب) to the back of the page of the manuscript. This is then followed by the symbol for the manuscript. For example, when indicating the front of page 35 of manuscript (س), this would be shown thus: [س -ل/35].

- With regards to the footnotes, I have chosen to number these continuously from the beginning to the end of the text.
- Ordinary brackets () are used to distinguish that the enclosed Arabic word is the subject of discussion of the line.

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